セブンス 4th 7th 4

Yomu Mishima
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illustration
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ヒーロー文庫

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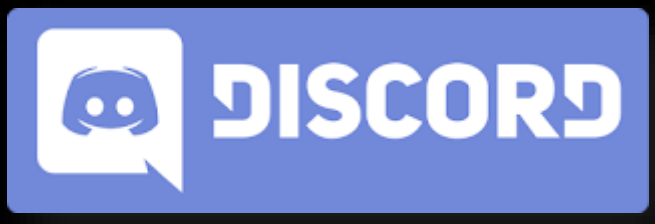

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4
Yomu Mishima
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「ナ、ナンパ……です」
ライエルは視線を落とし
か細い声で言った。
セブンス
7th

ライエルは、今、恋人同伴で
女性に謝罪しに来た
情けない男らしい。

まさか、ノウェム、アリア、ソフィアの三人が
同じ喫茶店を利用しているとは思いもしなかった。

「なんだ、
そうだったの」

ミランダさんは
笑顔を見せた。

「本当に……
申し訳ありませんでした！」

「あんた、馬鹿ね。
私が良い子ちゃんだって、
本当に信じていたの？」

「絶対に許さないから」
シャノンは誓うのだった。

片腕がない。
それを聞いて、
少女――クラーラ・ブルマー――
の左腕を見た。

オートマトンがベッドから立ち上がる。
そしてスカートを指で摘まみ持ち上げ頭を下げてきた。

INTRODUCTION

学術都市アラムサースに活動拠点を移した**ライエル**一行。

地下迷宮に入るために、学園の許可を得ようとするが、

仲間が少なく、実績もないライエルたちに許可は出ない。

なんとか地下迷宮に入る手立てを考えるのだが、困っている少女を助けてしまったために

ギルドと学園の生徒の印象を悪くしてしまった。

助けた義手の少女**クラーラ・ブルマー**は、優秀なサポートでアラムサースでは有名人。

彼女からアラムサースで学園に通う貴族を怒らせてはいけないと教えられてしまう。

やる気を出さない**歴代当主たち**に腹を立てつつ、

助言をうるさく感じてしまうライエルは反抗期に入っていた。

歴代当主たちが反対する中、ライエルが地下迷宮へ入るために取った行動は――

まさかのナンパ!?

そこで出会った**ミランダ**は、ウォルト家と縁のあるサークライ家の出身であり、

ライエルの婚約者になっていたかも知れない女性だった。

ミランダに連れられ、妹を紹介されたライエル。

妹の名前は**シャノン・サークライ**……目の不自由な儚げな少女だった。

だが、そんなシャノンに対して歴代当主たちが非情な決断を下す。

『シャノンの目を潰せ』

迷宮で待ち受ける真実とは――!?

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illustration よもぞ

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Prologue

I think responsibility is something heavy.

The four of us who are walking in this city that looks jumbled up, are adventurers who are going to switch our base of operations from Dalien to here, the academy city Arumsaas.

There is a reason why we moved from Dalien, that is convenient for beginners, to Arumsaas, where people gather to gain both knowledge and skill.

I, Lyle Walt, am a former noble—I was the eldest son of a Count house.

I lost in a match against my little sister Celes and got chased out from the house. After that I was reduced to being an adventurer.

On top of that, I am ignorant of society because I was living a life that was like house arrest in my house for many years. Because of that I'm treated as an ignorant spoiled young master. That is the evaluation of the surroundings after they saw me.

And someone like me is the leader of an adventurer party……it's a position with responsibility.

High buildings that pierced into the sky as though they're competing with each other are standing in a row as though they're boasting their novel structure.

We are walking under the shadows of those buildings, even so we who are going to the adventurer guild from the inn are sweating from the blazing sun.

When I touched my blue hair, it's a bit wet from sweat.

I took off my jacket and held it in my arm because it's too hot. Above my shirt is a silver pendant that is a heirloom. A blue jewel is embedded at the top of the pendant.

Today too it's shining disgustingly bright.

We avoided the sunlight while walking on the path that is covered with bricks. The road before this was stone paving.

「It's really all jumbled up.」

Walking behind me, Aria Lockwarde whose red hair gave a lively impression is also holding the same thought.

「I've thought it since when I saw this city from outside, and after seeing the inside this city really does look like a boy's toy box.」

Toy box. Certainly before we entered into Arumsaas and looked at it from afar, we could see several buildings peeking out from behind the outer wall.

Each of them is a building with unique look. That lack of unity……makes it look like a toy box somewhat.

Wearing a black robe and carrying the battle axe that is her family heirloom on her back, Sophia Rowley wiped her sweat frequently.

Aria-san's purple eyes are watching Sophia-san who is like that with a fed-up look.

「How about you take off that thick robe? I'm feeling hot just from looking at you.」

She has long black hair and strong-willed black eyes. Sophia-san is too serious for an adventurer. Perhaps it's the influence of her background as a daughter of a vassal noble.

According to the person herself, it seems she has strong reluctance showing her skin.

「It's to keep my skin from showing and to block the sunlight. Besides, under my robe I'm wearing attire that shows my body line like Aria. ……I can't show it outside.」

Naturally she is wearing clothes that are easy to move in under her robe. In contrast with the shy Sophia-san, Aria-san showed no sign of being bothered with her attire.

Aria-san is also a former capital noble from a Baron house—even though her house had a higher social standing than Sophia-san's house, and yet there is this kind of difference between them. Why is that?

When Sophia-san moved in a way to hide her large breasts, Aria-san who saw that looked at her own breasts. Although I think that I mustn't compare them, as expected Aria-san is far smaller than Sophia-san.

Teasing voices came at me who is comparing the two's breasts.

They're male voices. The voices aren't from people walking around us making fun of me.

The voices came from the Jewel.

The Arts that are recorded in the Jewel—also included the memories of their original owner. They are existences that taught me how to use the Arts and also talked to me like this.

But, these people—the six ancestors of the Walt House cannot be called as people of lofty virtue even as flattery.

The Second who is dressed like a hunter and knew about the early days of the Walt House is exasperated.

『What are these two idiots doing? Also Lyle, you're staring at their breasts too much. Novem-chan will be disgusted at you.』

The Third, a blond haired handsome man with a carefree personality is provoking me.

『Does Lyle like breasts? Though, as for me I think the butt is more important. But, I never did anything rude like Lyle who is staring hard like that.』

Certainly all the ancestors have amazing sides to them. But, perhaps because they are my relatives or because I'm their direct descendant……the way they talk to me is merciless.

The Fourth who is wearing glasses and looking scrupulous sighed at me.

『Haa, that behavior is really rude. Lyle, think of the girl's feeling.』

I never studied anything like a girl's feeling, or rather I was living like I was in house arrest for so long that I grew up not knowing how to interact with other people in the first place.

Strangely there is also a problem of me losing my memories of when I was around ten years old. It seems that in the past I was a lively child who was polite and intelligent. Unlike the me right now.

Even the Fifth who normally doesn't talk much and often looks disinterested is exasperated. But, it's not towards me but to the Fourth.

『The saying of a certain someone who couldn't talk back to his wife is really different.』

A tension was formed between the Fifth and the Fourth inside the Jewel.

These ancestors, because they have the memories of their lives, the relationships between each of them while they were alive are also continued to this time.

In other words, the family problems from the past are also continued without change even now.

Someone laughed heartily. It's the Sixth who is like a big brother to me. He is somewhat kinder to me compared to the other ancestors.

He has characteristic bristling hair and beard. His body is the biggest among the ancestors.

『Lyle is also a man after all, so of course he will be interested in that kind of thing. I too, when I was young, was really—』

It makes me embarrassed listening to him. It felt like I'm being laughed at at a family meeting.

The last was the Seventh. My grandfather coughed.

He has a stern face and swept back hair. The Seventh has an atmosphere that is fitting for a noble.

『As expected from someone who was playing around, what he said is different.』

His remark towards the Sixth is thorny.

The Jewel today is also noisy which sucked up my mana. However, this conversation—whether for good or bad cannot be heard by anyone else other than me.

The comrades around me, the people passing by me, and the people walking at the same direction as me cannot hear these voices.

And so, if I try to talk with them carelessly, then I will be treated as a dangerous guy who is talking to himself. It's unreasonable.

When I’m going to grab the Jewel to quiet them down, my last comrade—my former fiancée peeked into my face.

Her purple eyes reflected me. I raised up my guard, wondering if she is going to warn me about staring at breasts.

「Wha, what is it, Novem.」

She is a magician with her long hair that is shiny in golden brown color tied into a side ponytail. She is wearing a navy blue robe, and her hand is holding a silver staff that she brought from her house.

Her name is Novem—Novem Forxuz. She is the second daughter of a Baron house that has a long association with the Walt House, and a former fiancée who came chasing after me.

If Novem wasn’t there, then the me right now wouldn’t exist. She has helped me so much I can say that with certainty. She is an existence who I can’t go against.

She has good looks, her skill in magic is also excellent, she is perfect in everything……well, not really but, anyway she is really reliable.

「No, it’s because Lyle-sama is making a tired face since some time ago. Also Lyle-sama, did you bring the necessary paperwork?」

I took out the paperwork and guild card—a silver plate from my bag.

The guild card is a set of two cards. One card is to be owned by the adventurer, while the other card is to be kept by the guild. If the owner dies, then the name that is carved on the guild card will get scratched with a horizontal line, notifying of the owner’s death. It’s a convenient tool.

Also, for some reason, a guild card won’t get absorbed in a dungeon. It also won’t be consumed even if a monster ate it.

「I have the paperwork for the adventurer guild with me. Don't worry that much.」

I'm thankful for Novem's devotion but, when I'm thinking if I'm looking that unreliable it made me feel irritated.

Novem said 「I'm sorry」 and turned forward before she started walking again. Then the Second's voice came from inside the Jewel.

『Don't be angry like that. She was only asking.』

The Third spoke strangely understandingly.

『Is it that? You know, won't it be the rough period for Lyle soon?』

The teasing voice of the ancestors and their instructions recently feel really annoying to me.

The Fourth was in understanding.

『Aa~, that's possible. It's a difficult age after all.』

I rolled the Jewel with my fingertips so that the ancestors would be quiet.

.

「Eh? We cannot enter the dungeon?」

I presented the necessary paperwork for doing activity in Arumsaas to the adventurer guild's reception and took care of the procedures while receiving an explanation.

But, there I'm notified of the fact that Arumsaas's famous underground dungeon—the large scale dungeon that is evaluated as giving good earnings, it cannot be entered by us.

The guild staff member who is wearing round frame glasses is thin and slightly bald. Unlike Dalien's staff who gave kind and polite treatment, this staff member is obviously looking down on us.

「Adventurers who don't have any trust or strength cannot enter inside the dungeon. That is the rule here.」

This is troubling.

We have some leeway with the money at hand and we only come to Arumsaas in order to learn various things, so there is really no problem even if we don't enter the dungeon—is not actually the case with us.

「Can't you do something about it? What should we do so we can enter the dungeon?」

The staff member answered me in irritation.

「You can obtain trust if you diligently defeat monsters outside and sell a certain amount of magic stones to the guild. Other than that your number is lacking. Are you planning to enter the dungeon with only four people? Even if you have good equipment your number isn't enough.」

Number. The staff member said that a four man party is too little.

In the first place we planned to search for comrades in Arumsaas.

I hung my head down. At any rate, if it's like this…….

「You're telling us to defeat monsters outside under this blazing sun?」

When I unconsciously muttered that, the staff member's reaction is cold.

「Isn’t that an adventurer’s job? Please gather magic stones without complaining. Good grief, it’s troubling that the magic stones’ gathering is decreasing when it’s summer or winter.」

Yes, the season is summer. It’s really difficult to fight against monsters under this blazing sun.

I imagined carrying heavy luggage while walking around under the blazing sun to search for monsters. Naturally we would have to take more rest than normal in that situation. If not we would collapse.

It will consume stamina intensely, and then although it would depend on what kind of monster it is……I don’t think we will be able to earn much money.

After the staff member finished the procedure, his gaze told me to get lost from the reception right away.

The staff here are terribly cold towards adventurers.

The guild is a two-storied building. It’s not really big. Several display boards to put up requests are placed in the reception lobby at the first floor.

I left the reception and headed to the three who are waiting. I explained the situation.

Novem’s expression clouded.

「That’s, quite troubling. I didn’t hear about such circumstance before.」

However, Aria-san and Sophia-san seem to not understand. Aria-san tilted her head and asked Novem.

「We earned a lot of money at Dalien didn’t we? We will be alright for a while right?」

Certainly before we left Dalien, we participated in a dungeon subjugation and earned a lot. However, I can't say that it will be enough with that.

Novem explained to Aria-san.

「Just like in Dalien, we will have to stay at an inn here in Arumsaas. If we're searching for an inn of a certain standard, then the price will be quite high as expected. Besides, we also came here to learn various things.」

Sophia-san nodded.

「Yes. That's why, isn't it alright even if we aren't really fixated with working?」

The Second inside the Jewel spoke with a slightly rough voice hearing that. The Second's attitude towards Aria-san and Sophia-san is strict no matter what.

『Don't they understand that they aren't so well-off that they won't be able to study without doing anything else? Besides living like that will cause their fighting sense to dull right away. Are they planning to play around in Arumsaas the whole time huh?』

There are a lot of reasons to work.

In the first place, we're planning to search for comrades in Arumsaas. In that case, it's better to regularly visit the guild to gather information.

Also, doing nothing but studying will dull our senses in regards to battle just like the Second said.

Besides, right now there are only four of us, but perhaps our number will soon increase by four or six.

We are using an inn and on top of that we're mostly eating out. Our living expenses are really high.

The tools that we're using habitually also use up money. Even if we don't use them, we will still need to give them maintenance. For me it's my saber. Just because I don't use it doesn't mean that it won't need maintenance.

It's an important tool that I'm entrusting my life to. It needs to be taken care of everyday. And then, money is also necessary to take care of it. It's the so called maintenance cost.

「……Whether it's knowledge or skill, the more advanced and the more necessary it is, the more it will take time and money. We will have to work moderately but……it will be difficult to work outside.」

Novem also seems to understand just how difficult it would be to go outside in this season.

Sophia-san seemed to understand. Her face is tensing.

「Now that you mention it, it will be difficult from here due to the season. Thinking that it will still become even hotter after this, going outside is……」

But, if it's inside a dungeon, that kind of problem will be resolved even though there is also a lot of danger there.

Actually, there are a lot of dungeons with relatively well ordered environments that people can easily enter in order to lure humans into it. I heard that Arumsaas's underground dungeon is also that kind of dungeon.

In addition, because there will definitely be a fixed number of monsters within the limited space, it's extremely easy to earn money there.

Rather than going outside to search around for monsters, entering a dungeon is absolutely more efficient.

If we can enter the dungeon once or twice per month, we will be able to solve our money problem but…….

「I never thought that the guild's permission will be needed to enter the dungeon. No, perhaps in this case the problem is the strict judging?」

We are lacking the number of people and trust from the guild.

Aria-san understood the situation and muttered.

「Arumsaas is a troublesome place huh.」

I agree.

However, really, just what are we going to do?

A commotion happened while the three of us are feeling bewildered due to things that are contrary to our expectations.

When we turned our gaze toward the commotions, we saw a group of adventurers.

The Third whistled inside the Jewel. He explained the situation to me with a carefree tone.

『Looks like they are spoiled young nobles. Did they hire adventurers to enter the dungeon? It seems like they are having a quarrel from the look of it.』

The Seventh spat out without interest.

『Lyle, it's not something for you to get involved with. Get out of here right away.』

He said that, but the atmosphere is obviously dangerous. It attracted my attention.

Haughty looking young people are talking on and on in front of a girl. The surroundings are trying to not get involved with the group. The staff that left the counter are also obviously allied with the haughty young people.

It gives me an unpleasant feeling seeing that.

Sophia-san also heard the commotion and made a displeased face.

The reason is simple.

「A mere supporter should feel grateful just from being able to receive a reward. We were risking our life protecting you!」

A high-handed young man is wearing expensive looking equipment. The reason why I can clearly understand they're expensive is because there are a lot of decorations on them.

There are too many unnecessary decorations for fighting there.

In contrast, the adventurer girl who was called a supporter has a peculiar equipment.

She looks like she is wearing only the arm part of armor from her upper arm until her fingertips. However only her left arm is wearing that, other than that she is wearing clothes made from cloth or leather that are easy to move in.

Her blue hair is cut sloppily. It's disheveled looking like they aren't really cared after. Her red eyes that are visible from the lenses of her glasses made her look sleepy because they are half-closed.

Her petite body looks delicate, but that body is carrying a large and heavy looking rucksack that looked like she could enter herself into it. Her face is composed despite that.

Each of her hand is holding to the bag's shoulder belt. The girl doesn't look like she is carrying any weapon that stood out.

「I carried out my work as a supporter. Besides, if the reward I receive is subtracted with the necessary expenses like the items I prepared and the like, the left-over will only be a meager amount. I'm asking you to pay the amount that was promised.」

Her tone is strong-willed, or rather it's apathetic.

A vein formed on the haughty young man's forehead and he fell silent. Then the staff member interrupted.

「Don't you speak rudely like that! You were able to do work with this noble young master. Having him remember you for the future—」

However that girl doesn't back away. No, she is in a situation where she can't back away.

「I was made to participate in this half forcefully because of the guild's request. This is the third time. I also have my livelihood to think about.」

The petite girl's way of speaking irritated the staff member this time.

The Sixth is laughing.

『Even though she is small she's got quite the mouth to her. But, she is making too many enemies like that. She is a clumsy type in her way of living.』

Sophia-san opened her mouth.

「From their talk, that girl isn't in the wrong. Why is something like this……」

Then the haughty young man raised his voice, drew out his sword and pointed it at the girl. The girl twitched in reaction.

Her sleep looking eyes opened wider, even so she doesn't move from that place.

「So you won't listen to me! I used you just because you're a bit famous. A one-armed brat like you should be satisfied with just that!」

One-armed. Hearing that I looked at the girl's left arm. I used the Second's Art and focused on the girl's arm. What I saw is—

「……artificial arm?」

The arm that I thought looked like a suit of armor's left arm is an artificial arm. But, that hand is firmly gripping her bag's shoulder belt.

It's not just an unmovable artificial arm.

I'm curious how it moved, but my body moved before that.

Then the Third made fun of me.

『Eh? You're going to get involved? The opponent is a noble with high pride, don't you think it's better to not do that? If you want to help her than it doesn't need to be now—』

But before the Third finished speaking, my arm got caught and I stopped.

When I turned around, Novem is shaking her head.

「Lyle-sama, we shouldn't get involved when we don't really know the situation. Besides, that girl is no good.」

The 「no good」 that Novem said—that is also a big problematic point of her.

Novem is perfect and really reliable but, she is an owner of a harem idea. She is trying to put women around me. What's more, because the Walt House has requirements when taking a wife, she is choosing women who fulfill those family precepts to put at my side.

In fact she already put two people……Aria-san and Sophia-san around me.

I cannot understand that side of Novem.

「It doesn't matter if she is no good or not. I…….. Enough, I'll go.」

I stopped explaining and shook off Novem's arm. When I approached the noisy group, everyone's gaze gathered on me.

Without stopping I kicked away the sword the haughty young man is holding.

「Wha-! What's with you! Who do you think I am! I'm the son of a Viscount house that is serving in the palace. How dare you do such thing to—」

I looked at the man and spoke apathetically.

「If you have formed a contract, then you should carry it out to the letter. Did she demand the wrong amount from you?」

The face of the haughty young man twitched at my words.

「Who is going to pay several gold coins to a mere supporter huh!? Silver coin is enough for her!」

The young man’s face went red. In contrast the Third is laughing.

『This is why capital nobles are bothersome. This is why I hate them. Lyle, say this to him……so even a son of a capital noble feels that several gold coins is too much to pay is it?, like that.』

Nobles are largely divided into two categories.

Nobles that are acting as feudal lords in the provinces, and nobles that are serving the king in the palace. But, because of various things, the relation between these two kinds of nobles is bad.

It seems it’s also the same for the Walt House.

「Is the honorable son of a splendid Viscount house feeling it too much to pay several gold coins?」

The face of the haughty young man became even redder hearing those words. His blood vessel on his forehead was becoming even more visible. I’m worried that his vein will burst from him getting too agitated.

At the same time laughing voices came from the surroundings. The onlooker adventurers are laughing at my words.

The haughty young man who thought that he is getting laughed at took out gold coins from his wallet.

「Do, don’t look down on me! I’ll give you this if you want it that much!」

The girl gathered up the gold coins that were thrown to the floor, then she took out silver coins and bronze coins from her own wallet and handed it to the haughty young man.

「What is it now!?」

The haughty young man is irritated from me making fun of him and also getting laughed at on top of that.

「The reward is too much with this amount, so here is the change.」

In other words, she is saying that she won't accept more than the promised reward. But, the haughty young man slapped away the girl's hand.

「Who needs that, don't look down on me!」

He spat those words and then the group left the guild. After that the surroundings gave applause. However, the staff member immediately glared at the onlookers to shut them up before looking at us and yelling angrily.

「Just what have you done! That person is a noble! Even though I had especially introduced him to you……think more about your position next time!」

The staff member walked with large strides and returned to inside the guild. We're see off his back with a dumbfounded look, and then the girl bowed her head to me.

「Thank you very much.」

「Ah, no, such thing is」

I'm a bit embarrassed getting thanked like this. It feels good doing good things……is what I'm thinking but,

「But—」

The girl lifted her head and warned me.

「The situation just now……I believe that you shouldn't get involved with me.」

The person I helped said 「shouldn’t get involved」, I definitely heard her saying that.

.

We changed places to a restaurant that is located distantly from the guild.

The guild is established right beside the gate of the outer wall. The traffic of people coming and going is heavy and the dust cloud there is terrible. Because there is a horse stable nearby, the smell of animals and animal waste made the condition there really unsuitable for talking.

The girl I helped, Clara Bulmer said that she wants to show her gratitude and showed us to this restaurant.

Seeing how many adventurers there are in this restaurant, it’s clear that this restaurant is popular among adventurers.

What Clara who guided us to this place said is—

「The one with the most authority in Arumsaas is the academy. The people who are called professors there also carry out the management of the city. Although, it seems the professors doing the city management aren’t even half of their number.」

Clara-san is giving a simple explanation of the situation in Arumsaas. It seems that normally she wouldn’t act like the attitude she showed at the guild. The same thing has happened to her several times until now. Each time it happened she said that she would cry herself to sleep.

「The next one with authority are the nobles. Arumsaas is an academy city, so their official stance is that they came here to endeavor in their pursuit of knowledge. It is said that many of the

academy students are young nobles because they want to raise their prestige by studying here. Well, the majority of them are only playing around in here though.」

The young nobles who cannot inherit their house can obtain jobs in the royal court by saying that they had studied in Arumsaas. Or they would become independent and found their own house.

They can also make connections by getting acquainted with the heirs of the noble houses that enrolled to the academy. It's also not impossible to marry into a noble house through their connection here. It seems that the academy is also a convenient place for that kind of encounter.

Recently many of that kind of young noble became Clara-san's employer. This time too the guild half forced her to take the job.

Because of that she was unable to receive proper rewards and got troubled. This seems to be the reason for the situation just now.

As expected, if it happened that she couldn't receive a proper reward multiple times, she won't be able to live. And so, only this time she argued with her employer. It seems that she herself understood that she was doing something she isn't used to that she normally wouldn't do.

While we're talking about that, Clara-san is eating a lot of the lined up food one after another. Where is she putting up all those food in her small body? I can't help but find it mysterious.

「And the last is the adventurer guild. The characteristic of the Arumsaas guild is their extremely weak position towards the academy and the nobles.」

Aria-san is feeling surprised at the amount Clara-san ate while asking a question.

「Isn’t it strange for them to make light of adventurers because of that? They won’t be able to obtain magic stones and materials without us, they should treat us with more care……」

Clara-san used the napkin on the table to wipe the stain on her mouth.

「There is a dungeon in Arumsaas. This city is profiting enough from the magic stones and materials obtained from there. The academy is employing their own combat group to enter the dungeon, so the adventurers here tend to get belittled. They only think of the adventurers going out to gather magic stones as mere extras. I think it’s even to the degree they grumble that adventurers earning money outside in summer and winter as not doing their job.」

The Seventh seems happy listening to that explanation.

『That’s right. It’s the height of folly to leave a dungeon that has to be managed only to the guild and adventurers. They said that there is no feudal lord in Arumsaas but, in spite of that it’s making a very correct decision.』

Sophia-san tilted her head.

「In other words, you’re saying that the guild won’t really be troubled even without us here?」

Clara-san corrected Sophia-san’s interpretation.

「To be more precise, as long as there are adventurers who are able to enter the dungeon. Although, they won’t say that other adventurers are unneeded, but they will think of them as mere extras. Even if they don’t do anything a lot of adventurers will still gather here, so the guild doesn’t need to make any effort to keep adventurers from leaving. Well, the problem is that the parties that have grown skilled are leaving Arumsaas one after another.」

Arumsaas's adventurer guild seems to have a lot of problems one way or another.

「Even the qualifications to enter dungeon, the guild will recommend adventurers who will be judged by the academy and it's the academy who decides whether to give permission or not. But……from the academy's viewpoint, the young nobles are students, but at the same time they're also existences that will use a lot of money in the city.」

The way the explanation is going is becoming ominous.

「If you all are thinking to enter the dungeon, it's a mistake to have helped me at that place. After all by doing that you incurred the displeasure of the guild and the nobles.」

Novem concluded the talk after hearing that.

「In other words, you are saying that now it has become difficult for us to enter the dungeon.」

Clara-san nodded, and then she expressed her feelings towards me.

「I honestly feel happy that you helped me out, I'll also thank you. Thank you very much. But, if you're thinking about the future then as expected it's a problem for all of you to turn the guild and nobles into enemies. Do you have some kind of connection with the academy?」

I powerlessly shook my head.

The Third's provocative voice came from inside the Jewel.

『It became a big trouble now after you went against Novem-chan like a kid in his rebellious age. But, this too is you reaping what you sow……you've got to do something about it by yourself.』

Clara-san sighed while giving me a suggestion. She added 「I can't really recommend this but」 at the beginning.

「If you want to enter the dungeon as fast as possible, then as expected perhaps it will be faster to approach a noble. I can enter the dungeon by asking my acquaintances so I can go together with them, but I personally don't have the qualifications for it. Besides, most of my acquaintances are also not thinking of increasing the number of their members, so I can't introduce you to them. Here you should ask for a request from a noble who is an academy student.」

The method that Clara-san taught me is to accept a noble's request. And from there I'll have to become personally acquainted with that noble.

「A noble's request?」

Clara-san nodded.

「Yes. All the academy's students have the qualification to enter the dungeon. If you can have a noble take a liking to you and they hire your party as guards then……but, if you pick the wrong person」

Novem sighed.

「It might become like what happened to Clara-san.」

「Yes. That's why, I don't really recommend that. There are decent people among them but, I really cannot say that all of them are decent people. I'll also cooperate with all of you as much as I can but, I'm just a supporter who is doing freelance most of the time. So perhaps I won't really be reliable.」

Clara-san is an adventurer who specialized as a supporter. She won't fight but, her role is mainly to carry the baggage and support her comrades by doing other work for them. She isn't a member of a

party somewhere, but a solo—she is fundamentally alone, and if someone called her then she will cooperate with them. She is a freelance adventurer.

I held my head worriedly inside the restaurant that is bustling with adventurers.

「……What should I do?」

It became really hard to enter the dungeon because of my actions.

This situation……will I be able to do something about it?

Chapter 44 – Miranda Circry

—Arumsaas.

Located at the center of the city were the underground dungeon that Arumsaas managed and the library that was famous throughout the continent. Lastly, there was the Academy that was the reason why this city was known as the Academy City. Originally it was a place for scholars to gather, but before anyone realized it also gathered students to educate.

Right now it boasted a popularity that gathered the young nobles of the royal capital Centralle and the regions around it.

A girl who was attending such an academy, Miranda Circry, was the eldest daughter of the Circry House, a capital noble.

Her wavy light green hair was cut at an even length around her shoulder. The color of her eyes was the green of fresh verdure with a tinge of blue rather than normal green. And then her well ordered face and body style that was charming even from the view point of the same sex were the object of adoration of the academy's boys.

Although, Miranda's popularity didn't come from only her beauty as a female.

The Circry House had no son, only three sisters.

In other words, if someone could marry the eldest daughter Miranda, it would be possible for them to inherit the Circry House. The noble young men who were unable to inherit their own house approached Miranda with such ulterior motive behind them.

Inside a large classroom with the seats placed in a tier shape.

When the class was over, Miranda put all her belongings like her textbooks and so on into her bag and stood up. The girls immediately gathered around her.

「Miranda-san, how about we drop by somewhere today on the way home?」

「Unfair~! Hey, go shopping with me instead.」

「You should go with me, Miranda-san.」

Girls who also had noble background gathered around her when she was at the academy.

Miranda made a vague smile and refused their invitations with her usual excuse.

「I'm sorry. My little sister is waiting at home. Besides my servant has just resigned so I'll have to do the housework. I have to go home quickly.」

Then the three girls went 「Ee~」 with a disappointed expression.

There, it was the boys who gathered around this time.

「Then, how about I walk you home? If you're going shopping you will need someone to carry your things right?」

「Me, me! I'm free right now Miranda-chan!」

「You just shut up. Here it should be someone from a Count house like me—」

The young men were blatantly making their appeal.

Miranda responded with a smile even towards these young men.

「Thank you. But, I will be fine by myself.」

Miranda said that and left the classroom, but she noticed that she forgot something while walking in the corridor.

(Oh no. I have to return to get it.)

She returned through the path she passed. Then she heard voices from inside the classroom when she approached the entrance. The young men and women whose invitations she refused just now were speaking in irritation.

「What's with that woman! Even though I've taken the trouble to invite her!」

The girl who approached her with a smile just now was complaining to her surroundings with a disgruntled voice.

「Even though I'm taking the trouble to get close to her because of the authority her Circry House has. Without that there is no way I'll call out to that kind of woman.」

One of the men clicked his tongue.

「Chih, you all are getting in the way. I need that woman in order to rise in the world! The Circry House is a proper house that holds a wonderful position. If I can marry into that house, then even I」

There was only the six people who approached Miranda just now remaining inside the classroom.

「But you know, that woman's little sister, her eyes cannot see isn't it? They said that it was because of an accident but, it seems the truth is she couldn't see since she was born you know? Isn't that a problem as a noble?」

The topic changed to Miranda's little sister—Shannon.

One person, a pompous young man fiddled with his front bang while he started talking with a know-it-all air.

「The third daughter huh. The house where the two are living was originally a house to lock up the third daughter there. It's a truth that the Circry House wants to hide.」

Miranda bit her lower lip when the topic of Shannon came out.

(Even that child……that child hasn't done anything wrong.)

Noble, and then status, position. All those things became hindrances that caused Shannon to get chased out from Centralle to Arumsaas. But, if she wasn't born in the Circry House, it would also be doubtful whether Shannon would be able to grow until this age safely.

It could also be said that Shannon was able to survive because of the power of the house she was born into. If she was born in a poor house, she might have been abandoned right away after she was born.

「Aren't you knowledgeable?」

「I asked my house to investigate. My house must have also judged that it would be beneficial for me to marry into the Circry House. That's why, you guys just give up. Actually I also have a plan—」

「Stop jesting! A third son like me needs to marry into her house in order to prove myself to my house!」

The reason why the men approached Miranda was clear. It was simply because they wanted to marry into her house.

Their aim was her Circry house. Miranda herself was nothing more than an extra.

(Well, I'm already aware of it—)

In the academy there was also a lot of students who didn't come from noble backgrounds, but fundamentally the majority of them were wealthy. Because of that many of the men who approached Miranda had similar reasons.

But, perhaps they didn't think that they would be able to marry into a Viscount house so suddenly that some of them were saying things like wanting to get introduced to her little sister.

Their objective was to marry a daughter of a noble and buy a position as a noble or raising their prestige from their own house.

(Well, just that is still cute compared to others.)

These men who were making a ruckus were still in the cute category compared to the men from that kind of wealthy house. Previously there was even a son of a merchant who was talking about marriage proposal to her little sister as though he was talking about a business transaction.

Besides, Miranda was also a daughter who was born to a noble house.

(Nobles can be as they are exactly because of their houses. I can't criticize them.)

She had no intention to reproach the six people inside the classroom because she guessed their circumstances.

Miranda turned around and left without doing anything—

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—The house of the Circry sisters.

Waiting for her big sister's return was the third daughter of the Circry House, Shannon Circry.

She was wearing a red outfit. Her long, wavy light purple hair had been cared for really well. It was beautiful.

Her normally yellow eyes were shining golden right now.

Shannon was alone inside the house. She was humming.

A teapot was moving at the same time with the humming. The teapot that was placed on a small round table inside the bedroom was floating by itself and pouring tea into a cup.

With her hands that were wrapped in arm gloves, Shannon rhythmically tapped the arm rest of the wheelchair she was sitting on with her fingertip. She had a slender body and fair skin, but the figure of an ephemeral girl couldn't be found there.

The finger of her right hand touched her lips. She stopped humming after tea was poured into the cup and took a deep breath. She seemed to be tired. Shannon's eyes that were looking to the ceiling lost its shine and returned to a yellow color.

Inside the dim room, Shannon's hand reached out searchingly for the cup. She then grabbed it with both her hands and brought it to her mouth.

「It's tiring just as I thought.」

She drank tea while remembering everything until now.

The girl called Shannon couldn't see from birth.

But, due to a certain incident as the impetus, she obtained eyes that could see "the flow of mana" that human couldn't see.

It happened three years ago.

「……It's already three years since that day.」

A really bitter emotion could be felt from her low voice. Shannon who harbored such deep frustration remembered what happened that day really clearly even now.

「Soon……it'll be soon.」

At that time, Shannon was still living in the mansion of the Circry House—

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—Three years ago.

Shannon was passing the time in her room like usual.

She couldn't see from birth, but they told everyone that it was caused by an accident in order to hide the fact.

Shannon's mother immediately died after Shannon was born. The second daughter Doris thought that Shannon stole their mother and held a grudge against her. Because of that her attitude towards Shannon was extremely bad even when they met in the mansion.

If there was something that could excuse Doris, at the time when Shannon was born she was very young and at the peak of the period when she wanted to be spoiled by her parents.

Her mother was also kind and the household could be said as harmonious.

But, that mother died from giving birth to Shannon. Because of losing the mother, it was as though the fire had vanished from the Circry House.

The current head of the house, Miranda and Shannon's father deeply loved their mother. Because of that he became completely absorbed in his work since then without ever taking a new wife.

Only the eldest daughter Miranda was kind to Shannon. For Shannon, Miranda was a big sister who could do anything that she was proud of. She was also like a mother to her.

One day it happened.

At the time when she thought that the constant daily life would continue forever.

「An important guest will come soon. You have to attend the party too.」

Her father told her that.

An important guest would come to the mansion of the Circry House. Shannon who usually wouldn't be allowed to come out from her room was told to come out in front of everyone only for that day.

Shannon was feeling embarrassed but happy at that.

(Wha, what to do? I cannot see, so won't I make some kind of blunder? A, as I thought not showing up will be……)

From the perspective of Shannon who was usually put at a distance by her family, this was like she was recognized by her family. It made her happy.

The guest would be someone important. She asked Miranda many times what she should do so that she wouldn't blunder.

「Onee-sama, is it alright even if I show up?」

Miranda warmly encouraged Shannon.

「It's fine, Shannon. Besides, I'll also help you out.」

Doris seemed to be dissatisfied, but it was their father who decided to make Shannon attend, so she couldn't say any complaint.

Inside her room Shannon was really looking forward to participating in the party to welcome an important guest to their mansion.

(Will I be able to go outside after this? Not just to the garden inside the mansion, but outside……)

For Shannon who was half forced into a life of house arrest, it was a really meaningful day.

It happened on the day of the party.

「Welcome to our mansion.」

The party that was using the hall of the mansion was really extravagant. The state of the thorough preparations was conveyed even to the blind Shannon through the atmosphere. The servants inside the mansion were also really busy.

And then, as for the guest who was welcomed—

「Wonderful. I'm really pleased to have received the invitation.」

「Truly. If it's the invitation of the Circry House that has ties to us, then there is no reason to refuse. Now, "Celes" too, give your greeting.」

—It was a Count house, the Walt House.

「Nice to meet you, I am Celes Walt. I have heard from my parents about my lord Viscount. It's a pleasure to meet you.」

Celes made a fluent greeting. Her father replied to it with a gentle voice that he had never directed to even his daughters. Shannon felt slightly jealous at her father's reaction.

「What a prim and proper young lady. No, this is the Walt House we are talking about, so perhaps it will be better to call her a princess then.」

Shannon couldn't really understand what her father said about princess.

While she was thinking about the meaning that was filled into that word, her two big sisters greeted Count Walt, his wife, and Celes in turn.

And then Shannon's turn came—

「Ni, nice to me—」

「Oh? This girl is?」

Celes interrupted when Shannon was going to give her greeting. And then she approached Shannon and brought her face closer. The scent of a stranger that she wasn't used to smelling was right in front of her.

(Wha, what!?)

She didn't know what she should do to deal with the sudden occurrence. Celes sighed while she was feeling bewildered.

「—What, this is boring. She is just a garbage.」

Shannon was shocked. Shannon who was shut inside the mansion until now had never really came into contact with other people, but this was the first time she got told something this terrible right to her face.

「……Eh? Ga, garbage?」

When Shannon tried to look for help from the people around her, she felt the presence of Miranda approaching.

But, the people other than her agreed with Celes's words and showered Shannon with scorning laughter.

「Shannon, it's alright. Let's leave this place with me.」

Miranda whispered to her ear and pushed her wheelchair. They left the venue like that. When her back was turned to the venue, she could hear various voices from behind.

「Celes, as expected that attitude isn't good.」

「Yes, Otou-sama.」

When Celes apologized as though she was scolded for a small mischief, the adults around her laughed and forgave her.

「Well, it's fine then.」

「That's right. Besides what she said is the truth.」

「However, the house head too, why did he show that kind of child in front of everyone?」

Her relatives and others, her family were criticizing her. Far from defending her, they agreed with Celes and speaking ill of Shannon.

(Why……why!)

Miranda pushed the wheelchair as fast as she could to retreat from that place in a hurry.

At the end, she could hear her father's voice.

「No, I apologize for my embarrassing daughter.」

(Embarrassing……I am?)

The words that her father spoke while laughing in order to match the surroundings were deeply engraved into Shannon's chest.

Tears were falling out in large drops.

「Shannon? Are you okay? Let's return right away to your room.」

Shannon forcefully stopped the wheelchair, then she moved by herself while crying. Shannon originally could walk by herself. But she was sitting on a wheelchair simply because she was told to do that.

「Shannon, it's dangerous!」

Miranda talked to her in panic with her hand reaching out, but even that felt irritating to her. Tears were overflowing in large drops and then frustration welled up inside her.

The treatment as a laughingstock to her made her feel fierce anger and sadness.

(I……in order to receive this kind of treatment I……if only, someone like me, wasn't born!)

After that she didn't know how she managed to somehow return to her room.

But, her body remembered the structure of the mansion. After she entered the room and closed the door, she buried her face into the bed and bawled.

She cried, and cried……and then, Shannon lifted her face.

「……What?」

Red particles were emitting light inside the darkness where there was nothing that could be seen by any means. They floated in the surroundings, clung to objects and showed their shape. It was surprising for Shannon who knew nothing except darkness.

Particles of light floated around her.

「Wha, what's this!?」

When Shannon raised her voice, the particles simultaneously started to move. They stuck to the surrounding furniture, room's wall, floor, and ceiling, showing the object's shape to Shannon.

「……Eh?」

Shannon looked around. The sight of shapes formed from red lights looked completely the same as the position of the objects that her body remembered.

She looked at her hand.

Then, the red light turned and changed color. It showed her as yellow……no, as gold.

Shannon was entranced at her shape that she was seeing for the first time. She was feeling moved that she could see.

「Amazing. Amazing!」

Shannon whose eyes were bright red from crying until just now was feeling excited. She stood on her own legs and walked inside her room.

She stopped in front of a small table and when she tried touching it, there was certainly a table there.

The small red particles moved following Shannon's will. When she blew air from her mouth, they would soar up like dust and whirled in the air, starting to rotate.

When she realized that they moved just like she wanted, for some reason the red particles looked lovely to her.

「Just, what's this……eh? It's hurts slightly.」

Her eyes were gradually beginning to hurt. Shannon rubbed her eyes. Then, the particles of light that were visible until then suddenly vanished.

The sensation of suddenly being thrown into darkness made her search for the particles in panic. Then the red light particles slowly came into view again.

But, her eyes hurt.

「I can see but it's really tiring.」

Shannon returned to her bed, closed her eyes, and calmed her breathing. Her body was slightly sweaty because she was getting too excited.

She wiped the sweat on her forehead and thought.

「That's right. I've to tell Onee-sama.」

She wanted to tell Miranda quickly about this happy occurrence. But, the party apparently was still going on. She could hear the noises.

Shannon waited until the party was over.

(I'll apologize for before this and then tell her that I can see now……I wonder if Onee-sama will be happy then.)

She was feeling complicated from being turned into a laughing stock at the party. Even Shannon opened her heart only to her big sister Miranda.

She then fell asleep for a bit. When she opened her eyes, it was getting dark inside the mansion. She could hear the voices of the servants tidying up the aftermath of the party. The time was just right.

Shannon poured power into her eyes and became able to see the red light particles. She then rushed outside the room.

Mysteriously, she could see people's location even with walls and passages in between. Each person was emitting their own light with their own characteristic.

Shannon searched for the light of her beloved sister Miranda among those lights. It was her first time seeing the light, but she understood which was Miranda's light instinctively.

(Over there!)

She headed to a room that was near the hall. She advanced stealthily so that no one would discover her. Like that she approached until near Miranda, but then someone else was approaching Miranda's location.

(Who is it? Is that Otou-sama?)

Shannon guessed that it was her father from the aura and hid in the next room. She focused to listen to the voice in the next room, but she couldn't hear anything. However when Shannon focused to listen to sound, the red light particles shook and allowed Shannon to listen to the voice in the next room.

(Amazing! I am actually amazing!)

Shannon was rejoicing in her hiding. However, what she heard was a harsh reality.

Her father talked with a cold tone that was the opposite of his tone when talking to Celes.

『I thought itShannon would be useful but, the other side refused the marriage talk with you. It seems the talk of disinheritance is the truth.』

Miranda’s voice was gloomy.

『Yes. But, there was no need to use Shannon like—』

『That’s just how dangerous it is to get close to the current Walt House. Even so, that girl called Celes……she is even more than I imagined. I’m surprised that she is like that when she is the same age as Shannon.』

『Otou-sama, please don’t blame Shannon too much.』

『You also knew about the matter today. Think about the house more.』

The two’s conversation was continuing, but Shannon was dumbfounded.

「……They planned, to make me a laughingstock from the beginning? Onee-sama knew about that?」

Shannon’s largely opened eyes shined from increasing in power.

Tears spilled out, and then Shannon continued to cry without letting out any voice.

Next her father spoke about Shannon’s treatment from here on.

『There is also no reason to keep thatShannon in this mansion. I’ll send it to Arumsaas for studying. A servant who knows the circumstances will also go along, so you just forget about it.』

That meant she would be chased out from the mansion.

Shannon noticed at that time that she was abandoned.

「Aha, ahahaha……I’m an idiot from getting excited that I could attend the party. What, so he planned to throw me away.」

However Miranda talked back to her father.

『No way! I won't accept that! If you're going to do it no matter what, then I'll also go to Arumsaas! I'll stay at Shannon's side forever!』

The words that her father spoke out wasn't something that should be directed to his own daughter.

『……Do whatever you like. There won't be any problem if I make Doris take a husband. I held expectations in you but, it's disappointing.』

Shannon in the next room saw Miranda rush out from the room.

And then she cried while laughing.

「What's with that, even though she knew everything from the start. Even though she was also laughing at me……even though I believed in her. Even though Onee-sama was the only one I trusted!」

She pressed her face with both her hands and wiped her tears. The tears she couldn't wipe fell on the floor in large drops, and the Shannon swore.

「Fine. I'll absolutely……absolutely won't forgive them. Otou-sama, Doris-oneesama, Miranda-oneesama……also, everyone who made fun of me too! And then, that girl too!」

That day, Shannon began harboring a strong anger and vengeful thoughts towards that girl—Celes.

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—The present.

Miranda who finished shopping in Arumsaas's shopping district was holding a brown paper bag that was stuffed with many things.

All of them were food ingredients for her and Shannon.

At Centralle she had no experience of returning home while holding heavy baggage. But, it was something that she experienced repeatedly since coming to Arumsaas.

Now she was used to shopping and she was also acquainted with the middle aged women who opened shops in the shopping district.

Her relationship with them was one where they would sometimes give her extra for free.

「Haa, I've to hire a new servant soon.」

But, for Miranda there was also a part of her that felt unwilling to do so.

Originally she planned to hire a servant and entrust the majority of the shopping and housework to them.

The amount of money that her house sent her was enough to do that. In fact she had hired servants several times before but they would all immediately resign.

(I believe that the working conditions aren't bad though. Is it no good even if I pay a higher salary than others?)

Working time, holiday, and then salary—no matter which aspect, her treatment to her servants should be better than other employers.

A lot of young people came to Arumsaas in order to enroll into the academy. Because of that a lot of apartments for young people were constructed.

Largish houses with gardens attached were prepared for wealthy nobles and merchants. Those houses weren't just rented, some were also sold.

Most of them would change owner every several years, but there were also nobles who would keep ownership of the house forever.

The Circry House was also like that. They bought a house that was given to Miranda and Shannon.

But, Miranda also had it hard from being a student while taking care of her little sister and also doing the housework.

No matter how hard she worked, she couldn't keep up with the amount of work.

(Perhaps I should just ask our house to send servants……this is no good, wanting to rely on them right away like this.)

She shook her head and chided the indulgence of her own thinking while fastening her walking pace on her road home.

It seemed that she used too much time shopping. The setting of the sun and the brightness were gradually changing into evening.

(If I don't hurry back, Shannon will be waiting too long.)

When she looked ahead, suddenly a young man with characteristic blue hair and eyes was walking from there.

She got a slightly young impression from his features. He looked like one or two years younger than her.

The male who looked like he had just turned from a boy into a young man had a saber dangling from his waist. His hand was holding a jacket. His shirt was largely opened around his chest.

(Ah, come to think of it, there is also this kind of man at the academy.)

On his neck was a silver pendant with a blue gem……a Gem was shining there.

(He has a rare thing there. Is he an adventurer?)

He wore boots and dressed in a casual fashion. His hair was ruffled up.

If he dressed with a calmer style then he would look like a diligent young man which would be more appropriate for his age, which would be better than his current appearance. Miranda was thinking of such thing while walking to move passed him.

But, the young man in front of her cut off Miranda's path. He put his hand on the wall along the path so that Miranda's path was blocked.

「……Eh?」

While Miranda was bewildered, the young man spoke.

「Miss, where are you going?」

His tone felt somewhat awkward, and then his gaze was swimming around. He was also a bit sweaty. Even Miranda could see that he was nervous.

「E, err~……I'm going home.」

Then the young man replied back.

「I, I see.」

Miranda thought.

(……Huh? What is this person planning?)

Miranda was completely bewildered, but the young man seemed to be the same as her. He was acting completely restless. Even his nervous face was telling her that too.

「Err, what are you doing?」

When Miranda asked, the young man dropped his gaze and spoke with a feeble voice.

「Hi, hitting on you……miss.」

Miranda was speechless for a while hearing that reply. The young man was also stumped and fell into silence. The two of them turned completely stiff like that.

(Eh? Hitting on a woman? Is hitting on a woman…..really something like this?)

Miranda had experienced getting hit on by men several times, but she had never received one that was this terrible until now.

The young man who was placing his hand on the wall seemed to get tired of that posture and took off his hand. He stood still in front of Miranda.

Sometimes he would grab the Gem in front of his chest and rolled it around. He was really tense.

And then, he finally opened his mouth. Just when she wondered what he would say……

「Is this, no good? Well, of course this is no good.」

……Suddenly it was he himself who was in rejection.

As expected even Miranda couldn’t bear to look at him and gave him advice. Her helpful personality would be the ruin of her.

(Somehow, it would be too pitiful for him if it ended like this.)

「Err……you are hitting on woman right? Then, you have to say what you want to do. Like asking the woman to have tea together, or going to have fun, there are various things to do.」

The young man pondered for a bit. And then he answered.

「I'm fine with tea.」

「Right, that's it. Tea is fine! If that's the case, you have to say it clearly.」

(Eh? How has it become like I'm the one inviting him?)

Miranda was wondering why she was giving instructions on how to hit on woman to a young man whom she didn't know, but the talk was finally advancing so for now she waited for the young man's reaction.

「Then, won't you go have tea with me?」

「I'm sorry, I'm busy so I can't go have tea.」

The young man nodded when Miranda refused.

「Then a dinner. Do you like meat dishes?」

「No. That's not it! Understand it, my reply just now was a refusal!」

「Aa, I see! You mentioned tea so I completely thought that you don't want to have tea.」

Normally Miranda would force a smile and refuse to end the talk, but today she was getting into the talk with the other party due to a reason that even she didn't know.

Miranda felt amused for some reason seeing the troubled young man before her. She felt interested in the young man who was different from all the men she saw until now and all the young men who gathered around her.

「…..You are interesting aren't you.」

「Is that so?」

The young man scratched his hair shyly. Then suddenly a young man from the academy who was a bit narcissistic appeared from the street corner slightly ahead. His fingertips were toying with his long front hair.

「Hold right there!」

The young man rushed this way right after he yelled that. And then incomprehensibly he punched the young man who was hitting on her.

The young man was sent flying. Miranda immediately put her paper bag on the ground and ran towards him to help him stand. He was punched on the cheek, but the injury wasn't so bad.

「A, are you alright!?」

The narcissistic young man walked to Miranda's side.

「That was dangerous, Miranda. But, I'm here so it's alright now. Come, this place is dangerous. I'll escort you until your home.」

The man said that and his hand reached out, but Miranda brushed off that hand.

「Thank you for trying to help me. But, what are you thinking to suddenly punch someone like that? This person hasn't done anything that deserved that.」

The young man heard Miranda's words and made a stupid face.

「No, but, that……wait a second, Miranda!」

He started to panic. Miranda ignored him and helped the blue haired young man to stand up and checked him for injury.

「You seems to be fine but, let's treat your face just in case. Come to my house.」

「……Eh?」

The two young men were taken aback hearing those words—

Chapter 45 – The Walt House's Mystic Eyes

Going back slightly in time.

That day, I who was spending my time in the inn gathered the leaflets of private schools and dojos to search for something interesting.

As expected, a lot of leaflets were prepared so that even people who only just arrived in Arumsaas could understand it easily.

Sitting on the bed, I checked them one by one.

「Sword art instruction school Beckens……with this even you can become a reliable vanguard. Let's polish our sword art together.」

The Third scoffed while I was reading the leaflet for a sword art dojo.

『I wonder if a practice sword art that is learned in a dojo will be useful in real battle?』

I read the leaflet.

「But, it's written here that the trainer has a practical experience as an adventurer for ten years you know?」

The Fifth urged me to read the next one.

『You have already been taught sword art and you are really skilled. You don't need it, that's why next.』

I took the next leaflet.

「Let's peer into the abyss of magic. The water magic taught by grand wizard Claris. With this even you will become the core of your party's offense! Become the one relied on for firepower.」

The Sixth was laughing.

『Being in charge of firepower with water magic! No, I understand what it wants to say but……next!』

I took the next leaflet.

「A party's vital point is the scout. We will teach you the skill for that. Scout master.」

The Second sighed.

『You, that scout master…….no, certainly it's important. It's important but, isn't the name scout master ruining it in various ways?』

The Seventh seemed to be in agreement. He was also talking in excitement.

『You're right. Besides, Lyle is the cornerstone who supports the party at the center. There is no way he can be allowed to do something like scouting or the like.』

The Fourth spoke last after I read some more leaflets.

『None of them feels really right. As I thought, without looking with our own eyes it's……. Ah, Lyle, leave behind the leaflets. Use the back part that has nothing written on it effectively.』

I put the leaflets on the table beside the bed and lied down.

The girls went to check where the shops that sold things like daily necessities or essential items were located. I was staying behind at the inn alone.

「……Nothing to do.」

Then the Second spoke to me.

『Then, how about you go checking the request in the guild just like Clara-chan said?』

Requests—the jobs that were raised mainly by the academy's students.

If I took a job that was requested by young nobles from among those requests and could obtain their trust, it would become possible to enter the dungeon.

There was a reason to focus on young nobles. Because if they weren't a noble then there would be a risk that the other students or the academy or the guild running interference. For example, even if I became friendly with a merchant's son, Clara-san said that the guild would recommend other adventurers to our client when it was time for us to challenge the dungeon.

The academy's side also valued their students, so it seemed they always instructed the guild to introduce their students to adventurers that could be trusted with past results behind them as much as possible. If that happened, we wouldn't be able to enter the dungeon. Because our number was lacking, and we also had no trust and actual results in Arumsaas.

It was the same even if we wanted to gather members. Clara-san said that we who were hated by the guild would be hindered in a variety of ways by them. The guild staff here were really irritating.

—But, it would be a different story with young nobles.

Even the academy wouldn't be too strict when dealing with them, while the guild was blatantly acting subservient to them.

If they said that something was right then it was right. No one would say anything to them.

……The reason was because nobles were bothersome. I felt really complicated as someone who also came from a noble background.

I lifted my upper body from the bed and set out to the guild.

.

The guild that was located near the outer wall was placed beside the gate. Because of that it was hard to call its location as good.

The scale of Arumsaas as a city was big. From that the traffic of people coming and going was also heavy.

Food was transported from the neighboring villages every day to be sold in the market.

The materials and processed products that were obtained in Arumsaas would repeatedly come and go.

Because of that the area around the gate would easily get dusty. Cows and horses were pulling the carts so the smell of feces and urine was also terrible.

Adventurers without decent equipment were cleaning those up. It might be due to a request that they accepted from the guild. I also could see magicians scattering water with magic that was cast with token effort.

「The sun is blazing like this, so they dried up immediately huh.」

The scattered water evaporated, causing the air to be weirdly humid.

When I entered the guild, I couldn't find many adventurers because of the time that had greatly gone past noon.

When I headed towards the request board to see the request papers that were put up there, several adventurers were there. They checked the contents of the request papers and sighed.

Many of the request that were put out by the guild were related to the academy……the majority came especially from the students. Among them there were also requests from people who were called professor, but those requests were carefully put up at a different board. Those who accomplished the request from a professor would definitely obtain favor from the academy.

But, I heard that all of them were terrible requests.

When I tried looking due to curiosity, my face cramped.

「A whole skeletal structure of a wyvern? And then a dragon……the fresh stomach of a fire dragon? This one is……no way.」

The request that I thought to be the easiest to accomplish was to enter Arumsaas's underground dungeon—and obtain the magic stone of the boss at floor 40.

However, we couldn't enter the dungeon in the first place so we couldn't accept it.

The Third was also surprised.

『This academy professor bunch aren't right in the head. I also can't understand this request for a dragon's fresh stomach. In other words, they're asking us to catch one alive?』

The Seventh spoke with a conflicted tone.

『……I've never fought a dragon. I heard that in the past there was also a dragon in our territory though?』

The Second lightly replied.

『Ah, there was. But you know, Oyaji defeated it……that guy was the boss of that area, and then nothing like that guy appeared anymore after that. ……I also wanted to fight one.』

I couldn’t understand the feelings of the Second who was sounding a bit disappointed.

It was said that you had no luck if you encountered a monster like a dragon. The First—Basil Walt defeated a land dragon which was said to be relatively easy to defeat because it couldn’t fly, but since then it seemed none of the ancestors had even fought any dragon.

The Sixth also spoke in disappointment.

『Dragon huh. Just once is fine, I wanted to try fighting it. Why won’t it appear in our house’s territory? No, I understand that the territory will be devastated if one appears, but……even so.』

Putting aside whether he was just acting tough or actually serious,

From the beginning I had no intention to accept a request like dragon extermination so I moved and checked the requests from academy students.

However, there was no request that could lead to obtain trust.

「House cleaning? Doing homework in their place? ……What’s this?」

Among them there was also a job like wanting to investigate information about a girl they liked.

All of them were chores, and the request reward was also not really much. Besides, it was also unknown whether the client was a noble or not.

The Third criticized me while I was reading the request papers in deep thought.

『In the first place haven’t we decided not to get involved with nobles before coming to Arumsaas? So why are you coming here to

get involved with them instead? It's appalling how you willingly stuck your nose into troublesome thing like this.』

……It wasn't like I stuck my nose into troublesome thing because I liked it.

This was only because it would be more efficient using this method.

I rolled the Jewel with my fingertips, but the Third didn't stop talking and continued picking on me. Even though I signaled him to be quiet, today he kept picking on me.

『Isn't it also fine to work hard outside? It's better to go through hardship when you're young. Besides, there is also no need to be fixated on the dungeon right?』

I was irritated at the Third who wouldn't shut up, but the Third seemed to find that amusing.

The Fourth was exasperated at the Third who was like that.

『That's some bad taste. However, it's a fact that the efficiency will be different. The earning will be in a different league after all. As expected here you should be more—』

In the middle of the Fourth's talk, my gaze turned towards a person who entered the guild.

That person threw open the guild's door roughly and entered. He was wearing a white shirt and black tight trouser. His leather shoes were somewhat dirty. It seemed that was bothering him.

He covered his mouth with a white handkerchief and furrowed his eyebrows.

With how rudely he entered, the gazes of the staff and adventurers inside the guild gathered on him. It seemed he was a student of the academy.

His first sentence was terrible.

「……It stinks.」

Then the guild's staff rubbed his hands while approaching the man—an academy student.

「What could be your business here today?」

The man's fingertips played with his long front hair while talking in irritation.

「That's obvious. I came to make a request. Quickly choose an adventurer for me.」

Even the guild staff was bewildered at his high-handed attitude. It seemed the man was undoubtedly a noble.

I could see something like a house crest on the expensive looking ornament he was wearing.

「I, if it's a request, then after young master fills the necessary paperwork I would be able to dispatch an adventurer that meets the requirement tomorrow so—」

The man seemed to be displeased by the staff member's explanation and his mood became worse.

「So you're saying that you can't accept my request right away! You, I am from a Count house—」

There the guild staff member rubbed his hands while nodding his head many times to the man who was starting to boast about his pedigree.

The ancestors said this hearing that.

『Just what is going on with the youth today if this guy is really a young noble?』

『Haha~, this kind of idiot always exist whether it's in the past or present. But, it's amusing to watch.』

『This goes past being exasperating right into being funny.』

『I wish they will raise their other children properly too, not just the eldest son.』

『……The Fifth also didn't do anything for us. However, this is terrible!』

『However, just what did this guy come to the guild for?』

Yes. What was on my mind was what kind of request this haughty young noble wanted to make to the guild.

If it was a request that I could accomplish then……I wanted to accept it.

While I was thinking that, the man started saying something absurd. It was to the degree that the guild staff also asked back in disbelief at the request.

「……Hah? I, in other words, you wish for someone to act as a scoundrel to harass a girl who you like?」

The man flicked his front hair with his finger and affirmed it. He showed not even a shred of shame.

「Exactly. That's a fitting job for a filthy adventurer isn't it? Let's see. I'll have them dressed slovenly and hit on the targeted girl. When he is pressing the girl persistently, I'll make my entrance and save her! How's that?」

Even the guild staff was bewildered being asked that.

「I, I think that's good. The, then I will immediately write the document—」

「I'm saying that's too slow! Do it within today!」

His attitude was really bad. There was even an adventurer around him who clicked his tongue.

But…….

I moved to approach the man, but a voice inside the Jewel stopped me.

『O, oi, Lyle! Don't tell me, you……are going to accept that guy's request!? Stop, that's bad. My instinct is telling me to not do it!』

『Lyle, you can laugh at that kind of human because you are watching him from far away, but he is a type of human you mustn't approach. It won't be a laughing matter.』

『Why are you rushing like this? Never mind that, just leave immediately.』

『Lyle, don't get involved with that. It won't turn into anything decent.』

『Indeed. Lyle, you are a good boy so listen to what we said.』

Normally I would listen to the opinions of the ancestors and back away. But, right now I really didn't want to do that.

There wouldn’t be any problem if I succeeded.

The Third spoke loudly but, I ignored him.

『Lyle, listen to us! What’s this, recently you’re being difficult you know?』

『……Now that you mention it, he might be in that kind of phase.』

The Fifth muttered and the Third spoke with hidden implication.

『—Well, anyone will have that kind of phase I guess. Isn’t it fine sometimes? In exchange, you’ll have to take responsibility for it.』

What were they worrying about? From what I heard, it was a request without any problem in it.

In other words, I just needed to hit on a girl and fail. I only needed to act the villain.

It was a simple job that anyone could do. After all, I only needed to fail.

「Say, that request……how about I accept it?」

.

And then now we return to the scene where the girl I hit on—Miranda Circy gave me treatment in her house.

Miranda-san carried a medicine box and checked my cheek and the inside of my mouth. She said that the injury wasn’t so bad and cast healing magic on me. After that she pressed on my cheek a cloth that was smeared with medicine which would slightly sting on the skin.

I twisted my body the moment I got punched, so obviously there wasn’t anything exaggerated like a wound on me.

In the first place, I had no qualification to receive this kind of courteous treatment.

「Tha, thank you very much.」

「You're welcome. But, I'm sorry. To have an injured person carry my things for me.」

The paper bag that was filled with food ingredients was really heavy. That was why I carried it for her as my minimum atonement to her.

The smug young nobleman—his request had me hit on Miranda-san.

And yet, how did it turn out like this……how?

The Third was laughing.

『Just how are you succeeding even though you have to fail in it huh?』

……How did I succeed instead!

「What's wrong? Does it hurt?」

Miranda-san who was looking at me seemed to be genuinely worried.

I was receiving treatment at the table that apparently was used for meals normally. She even prepared tea for me.

「No, it's nothing.」

「I see, that's good.」

She kindly smiled. Both her hands were holding a steamy cup towards her mouth. Her appearance looked really relieved.

That expression constricted my heart all the more. My heart felt painful that I was deceiving someone this kind.

「Hey, today is impossible but, let's have tea another day.」

「Ha, having tea!?」

Miranda-san looked at the surprised me in a bit of exasperation.

「Why are you surprised? That's your objective in the first place.」

That was right but, my true objective was to get hated by Miranda-san and then the smug man would punch me. That was the plan, but I couldn't say that.

I hit on you planning to fail, if I said something like that…….

Then, there was a sound from near the door of the room.

「Onee-sama? Is there a guest?」

When I turned my gaze to the door, there was a girl on a wheelchair there. She was in a posture of leaning on the door knob while asking about me—

In that instant, the Fifth and the Sixth—and then the Seventh reacted.

Miranda-san stood up from her chair and walked towards the girl.

「I'm sorry Shannon. This guest—err~, what is your name again?」

Come to think of it, I still hadn't introduced myself.

「It's Lyle. Lyle Walt—」

Then, Miranda-san moved behind the wheelchair of the girl called Shannon while making a slightly surprised face.

But, the most surprising thing was—

「Lyle-san is it? Nice to meet you, I am Shannon. That……as you can see, my eyes are impaired.」

Miranda-san looked down on Shannon-chan while making a slightly sad face.

「It's from an accident you see. It resulted in this. I'm sorry, I'll keep Shannon company for now so please wait for a bit.」

Miranda-chan pushed Shannon-chan out of the room.

I saw off her back and then recalled the sight just now.

「Her yellow eyes shined? Did I see wrong?」

When I said my family name, Shannon-chan's eyes shined from yellow to golden just for an instant and her gaze turned towards my face.

I was thinking whether I was seeing wrong while asking the ancestors. Then the ancestors starting from the Second until the Fourth gave their affirmative.

『Yeah, it was just for an instant though.』

『That girl, is it really true that she can't see? The moment her eyes shined……she was looking at Lyle's face.』

『She reacted at the Walt family name. Are they relatives?』

The Fifth admitted it when the Fourth said that.

『……My daughter married into their house. It's obvious from their family name. Besides, those two also look similar.』

『The Circry House. If they're still the same like in the past, then they're a Viscount house in the capital. They were given a really important post there.』

『It was also the same in my era. It was the house Oba-ueaunt married into, so we were associated quiet closely. In that case……Lyle, by any chance, that girl called Miranda is a girl who might have became your wife.』

It was bewildering to be told that so suddenly but, how would that happen?

The Fifth's daughter. The Sixth's little sister. The Seventh's aunt. I understood that a woman from the Walt House married into the Circry House.

But, the Fifth said that there was something even more important than that and opened his mouth gloomily.

『We called those eyes "Mystic Eyes". Because they are eyes that can see mana.』

The Third was impressed.

『Hee, that's a splendid name. And, you said those eyes were shining because of that?』

The Sixth's voice was different from usual, the feeling of great reluctance……of not wanting to say it, but he helplessly spoke because it had to be said. Such feeling was oozing from his voice.

『Lyle, the eyes of that girl Shannon, perhaps you will have to—crush them.』

Those were words that were really harsh to be said towards a girl. They were also words that I never thought would be spoken by the Sixth.

Normally, no matter how frivolous the Sixth was, he was kind somewhere inside. I couldn't believe that he would say something like that.

After that, I who was bothered by the Sixth's words made a promise with Miranda-san to meet tomorrow and left.

I thought that I had to return quickly and listened to the circumstances.

.

—Shannon was looking at Miranda in the kitchen.

Miranda started preparing dinner after Lyle went home, but Shannon really didn't feel amused.

「Onee-sama, you seem to be happy.」

Miranda turned towards Shannon.

「I, is that so? But, to think that he is a Walt……does Shannon not like it just as I thought?」

Miranda was looking happier than usual even while looking embarrassed. Shannon felt it even without using her eyes' power.

Her tone, and then her footsteps. Various things were teaching her that Miranda was happy.

「I'm not feeling bothered by that person. But, perhaps this is fate.」

Miranda who didn't notice Shannon's slight exasperation said「That's right, that's right isn't it!」 happily.

(Onee-sama really likes him. Well, he isn't worthy for Onee-sama so I'll have him disappear right away though. Onee-sama, I wonder what kind of sad face she will make.)

While Miranda was looking at the state of the cooking, Shannon was watching her back and smiled meaningfully with shining eyes—

.

Night.

I who sent my consciousness into the Jewel arrived in the round table room.

A round table was placed at the center of the round shaped room. Chairs were prepared there for the ancestors and me.

At the location right in front of me, a silver great sword was floating in the place of the First's chair. It reminded me that the First was there in the past.

The ancestors were creating a dark atmosphere inside that room.

The Second opened his mouth with my arrival.

『You are going to explain aren't you? You said to crush the eyes of a girl who is in that state, so I believe that you will have a fitting reason for that.』

There was no way that the Sixth would say something like that just for fun, so he looked disgruntled.

『Could it be, it's that story? Even I am not recommending that but, it's true that's a dangerous object.』

The Seventh folded his arm and agreed with the Sixth's opinion.

『Mystic eyes, you all must think what's the deal with such an exaggerated name but, there is no doubt those eyes possess considerable power. Well, I don't know if that girl is able to use it as skillfully as Oba-ue—as Milleia Walt could.』

The name of the woman who married into the Circry House was Milleia Walt. No, should I call her Milleia Circry?

The Fourth turned his gaze towards the Fifth.

『I'll have you explain it properly.』

The Fifth looked down and folded his hands while talking.

『Milleia was one of my daughters. She couldn't see since she was born, and her eyes were yellow. Her appearance is similar to Miranda but, the color of her hair is similar to Shannon. No, perhaps in this case I should say that two of them are similar to her……well, anyway her eyes couldn't see.』

The Third narrowed his eyes.

『Hmm, I'm curious how the Fifth was treating her. In my time it wasn't unusual for that kind of child to get locked up. I also often heard how they suddenly died from sickness.』

The Fifth slightly smiled.

『She was married. Guess it from that. I kept her importantly in the mansion. I was wondering whether to wed her to a retainer who knew the circumstances. But, the talk was canceled after Milleia's eyes became mystic eyes.』

It seemed that Milleia-san wasn't shunned by the Walt House.

……I felt, a bit relieved. Perhaps because my life was like a house arrest, I overlapped my circumstances with her.

『According to Milleia, mana seems to be really small red light particles. Well, she said that living things circulate mana inside their bodies and also emit it to the surroundings.』

The Fifth said「The problem is」 with stronger tone.

『It seems that the drifting mana will move due to the movements of a human's heart. Milleia who possessed the eyes that can see that was able to read people's emotions. If it's only that then I can just say amazing and that's it. But, there is a continuation. Milleia used her eyes and experimented repeatedly. And then, she reported to me. If she forcefully manipulated someone's mana, she could manipulate even their emotions.』

That was……certainly, more scary rather than amazing.

In other words, she was able to manipulate other people's emotions.

The Fourth's expression turned complicated hearing that.

『That's certainly more scary rather than amazing. Depending on how it is used then troublesome—』

『You think so right? But, the problem isn't there. It's how Milleia was able to manipulate the magic power she could see. Something like emotion manipulation is only a part of the whole. If she felt like it, she could control humans as she pleased. She showed how she used difficult magic just by manipulating mana slightly. There was someone who was really good at hiding using his Art but……Milleia saw through him at a glance.』

The Second's expression turned serious.

『Was it done in an arranged experiment? If you told her, search for someone hiding now, then it would be easy to find him.』

The Sixth grinned.

『The person Milleia discovered was a famous assassin at that time. It was said that it was impossible to discover the guy. Other than that she once also discovered poison and even the maid who mixed it into the food.』

The Third whistled.

『That's indeed super convenient. It completely outshone my Art.』

The Sixth folded his arms while letting out a deep sigh. And then, he talked about Milleia-san's character.

『Fortunately, me and pops—the Fifth treated her well. We didn't shun her because she was blind. Besides, she was a kind child. It would have been a relief if only she could stay at my side.』

The Fifth made fun of the Sixth.

『Milleia was different from your other little sisters, she was obedient so that was why you doted on her. It was disgusting watching that. When you cried harder than her parents when she married it made us calm instead. That was also unsightly.』

The Sixth glared at the Fifth. The Seventh cleared his throat during that.

『Well, if Oba-ue was shunned and she held a grudge against the Walt House, then all of us won't be here. That was how amazing Oba-ue was.』

Why was someone that dangerous married into another house?

While I felt bothered by that, the Fifth talked about the circumstances regarding that.

『That child was kind. At that time there was fierce war everywhere. There were also a lot of guys who broke mentally on the battlefield. Milleia started treating those guys. At first it was just relatives. Then the people inside our territory……the rumor spread and then the next head of the Circry House who went onto the battlefield and got traumatized relied on his connections and came to us.』

The next head of the Circry House stayed in the mansion and he talked with Milleia-san during his treatment.

The Sixth continued the talk in irritation.

『That damn brat. He came to me after his treatment was finished and said, give me Milleia. When I socked his face Milleia covered him……even my mothers turned into my enemy……shit-!』

It seemed he got into a good relationship with Milleia-san without anyone noticing.

With the surroundings also supporting them, Milleia-san ended up marrying into the Circry House.

The Second hid his eyes with his hand and summarized the story until now.

『In other words, you're saying that this Shannon girl inherited that mystic eyes?』

The Fifth nodded.

『I don't know how far she can do the same things but, that shine was the same as Milleia. Though if it's only appearance then Miranda looks more similar to Milleia.』

I heard Miranda-san's name and looked at the Seventh.

「Now that you mention it, at Miranda-san's house the Seventh said about me and Miranda-san, that's—」

The Seventh told me about the talk before this—that there was a possibility of Miranda-san becoming my wife.

『Ah, that's right. I said it before right? There was an arrangement to have the Walt House raised to a Duke house in your or the next generation. In case there was no girl of matching age as Lyle in the royal family, the plan was to move forward with marriage to the daughter that was born in the Circry House. After all the cooperation of a capital noble in the royal capital will be essential if we're going to aim for advancement to Duke rank. For me it didn't really matter who the other party is but……Oba-ue had died at that time, so that marriage would also give the nuance of reforming our connection with them.』

It seemed there was quite a deep relation between both houses. Even that relation became something terrible due to my fault.

The Third looked at the bewildered me and laughed.

『To think that Lyle would call out to such a fateful partner due to faking hitting on a woman. What's more, you did that even though you already have three lovers. Aa~aa, Miranda-chan is really pitiful~』

The lenses of the Fourth's glasses glinted eerily.

『Truly. That's why I told you to stop……in the first place, don't you think that doing this is rude to the woman?』

The surrounding's gazes was criticizing me.

I could only endure it while feeling ashamed. This was the result of going against the ancestors. It really wasn't funny at all.

The one who sent a helping hand to the troubled me was unexpectedly the Fifth.

『Just leave it with that. Well, the meeting was the worst but, it's fortunate that we can meet with Milleia's grandchildren or great grandchildren here. We also discovered the mystic eyes after all. The problem is……now it becomes necessary to ascertain the character of this girl Shannon.』

Everyone made a serious expression. No one wanted to think about something like this because they liked it.

The Seventh asked the Fifth.

『Even though she inherited the eyes, it's doubtful that she inherited all the abilities. Do we have to remove her eyes even then?』

The Fifth asserted coldly.

『We have to. Depending on Shannon's personality, do it no matter how weak her power is at the present. If we leave this alone, it will really become dangerous. It will become exactly like what the First said……like the existence that is possessed by the Evil God. I don't know about Celes but, I'll believe it if I'm told that Shannon is possessed by an Evil God. Ain't no way we can just leave this matter alone. ……I won't let that child's eyes to be used for bad things.』

The words of the Fifth was oozing with the feeling of not wanting to let the eyes that were inherited from Milleia-san to be used for bad things.

The Sixth also folded his arms and didn't say anything. He seemed to feel the same.

Even so, an existence possessed by the Evil God……I never thought that I would hear about it again like this.

Once, the First heard my story and said that Celes was an existence possessed by the Evil God. I remembered how the other ancestors didn't believe it.

But, the Fifth said that he would believe it if it was in Shannon's case.

……Though, I was unable to feel that Shannon-chan was an existence that was even more fiendish than even Celes.

Chapter 46 – Damien Valle's Request

『What's this? Isn't this the worst situation?』

I could hear the Third's voice.

The place was a café. It was around ten o'clock. After eating breakfast at the inn, I acted nonchalant and went out alone. I wandered around the city for a while before meeting Miranda-san at the prearranged place. And then both of us entered the café.

It was all good until we entered inside. I intended to apologize about the matter yesterday in all sincerity. Even if I got slapped or punched, I intended to quietly accept it.

I thought that it couldn't be helped even if she did that much to me. And yet…….

「Lyle, just what are you doing here after refusing our invitation this morning?」

……Aria-san, whose eyebrows were twitching while her lips were smiling even though it didn't reach her eyes, was demanding an explanation from me.

「Lyle-dono, what is your relationship with this person?」

Sophia-san asked her question quietly and apathetically. Her behavior was also different from usual with thorniness to it.

「Lyle-sama, I wish that you will tell me beforehand when you are calling out to a woman.」

As for Novem, she spoke as though I was calling out to a woman again. 'You're wrong, That's not the case.' I wanted to yell that in this place.

The surroundings seemed to notice that the atmosphere of our table was strange. The waitress and customers were looking this way while whispering in low voices. This is bad. Miranda-san too was surely angry—

「You, could it be you're Aria? Aria Lockwarde!?」

「Eh!? Miranda? Miranda of Circry?」

「Yes! That's right! Aria, are you well?」

—It seemed the two were acquainted. Before getting angry, she was getting happy at the reunion with Aria-san who was actually her acquaintance.

「I, I'm well but, why is Miranda together with Lyle?」

From Aria-san's attitude, it didn't look like her relationship with Miranda-san was bad. Aria-san also looked happy with the reunion but, she was looking alternately at my face and Miranda-san's face because she was curious about my relationship with Miranda-san.

「Ah, actually about that—」

Miranda-san opened her mouth, but I stood up and bowed my head deeply. I put both my hands on the table and smashed my head on it.

DON, that voice and the sound of rattling cups resounded inside the café.

「I'm really……really sorry!」

Novem who was beside me asked in bewilderment seeing what I was doing.

「Lyle-sama? Lyle-sama, just what are you apologizing about?」

The Fourth explained the current situation.

『This looks like you are apologizing to a girl you hit on while being accompanied by your lovers. What a pathetic state.』

The waitresses and customers around us were getting heated up with a topic that was exactly like what the Fourth said.

I, right now……looked like a pathetic man who came to apologize to a woman while being accompanied by my lovers.

To think, that Novem and the others would be using the same café, such thing never even crossed my mind. When we entered the café and sat down, the three of them were at the neighboring table.

There was no path of escape, and I also didn't know what kind of excuse I could make. Furthermore in a stroke of bad luck this morning I refused the invitation from the three of them.

The timing was nothing but the worst. The Sixth spoke with a small voice.

『There is no way to follow up something like this.』

The Seventh also muttered in agreement.

『Lyle, apologize sincerely. This is your responsibility.』

A responsibility towards the result that came to be from my thoughtless action. Heavy. This thing called responsibility was really heavy.

I was told to raise my head for the time being, so I did that and explained the situation from the beginning to the four of them. It went without saying that when I reached the part of acting to hit on a woman, the gazes of the girls became terribly cold.

「What, so that's how it is.」

I explained everything and waited to be punched. Miranda-san showed a smile to me who was like that.

「Mi, Miranda-san? It might be strange to say this myself but, I think it's only natural even if I get beaten up.」

The Third made fun of me.

『I thought that you would be splashed with the drink though. Eh? Miranda-chan is really kind. Or rather, isn't she too kind?』

The Sixth seemed happy for some reason.

『Not just her appearance, she also inherited Milleia's heart. However, when I recall that it's my descendant who hurt this kind of gentle girl……I want to cry.』

The Seventh looked like he was going to say something but, in the end he didn't open his mouth.

Aria-san stood up from her seat.

「Miranda, you kept being on the losing end because you always forgive other people like that. It's alright for you to get angry here. Like, you can punch him or something.」

Aria-san was seriously worried for Miranda-san but, Miranda-san lifted the cup of tea she ordered while making a troubled smile.

「Nn~, but Lyle-kun also had his circumstance right? Besides, isn't it a problem concerning the livelihood of Aria and everyone?」

This time it was Aria-san who was troubled. She sat back down and spoke with a small voice.

「That's true but, you are kind so that way is……」

Miranda-san said 「Thank you」 while looking at me.

「Hey, if it's about that right to enter the dungeon, then I think I can do something about it you know?」

This time it was Sophia-san who got hooked by Miranda-san's words and asked.

「Really!?」

Miranda-san nodded and took a sip of her tea to moisten the inside of her mouth. And then, she started talking about the Academy.

「It's because the Academy's students are given the right to enter the dungeon. Even I am pretty much registered as an adventurer. Although, I'll also need to submit an application when entering the dungeon, and students usually enter when they are given assignments. Though there are also boys who enter the dungeon in order to boast about their ability.」

Arumsaas's underground dungeon. When someone managed to conquer it until deep inside, naturally they would be considered to be strong.

Although, it seemed that recently many of the noble youths were only hiring adventurers to guard them while they themselves weren't doing anything.

The Fourth grasped the situation.

『I see, the academy students who were making a ruckus at the guild when we just arrived at Arumsaas were entering the dungeon in that way. Come to think of it, the adventurers around here look like they're quite skilled.』

The Second was exasperated.

『If they are doing something like that, then everyone will become unable to believe them when they talked about how many floors they conquered. Just what are they doing dropping their credibility on their own like this.』

Surely they were thinking that it would be fine as long as they themselves could obtain a government post without giving any consideration at all about their junior in the future.

Incidentally, it was a welcome news that we would also be able to enter the dungeon if only Miranda-san would hire us.

However, Miranda-san continued with a troubled face.

「But, although this can become a temporary solution, it's troublesome because I'll have to accompany you every time you enter the dungeon. I also have my own daily routine, so there will be times when I won't be able to come along even when everyone wants to go.」

Novem made a suggestion to Miranda-san.

「Then, can we ask you to introduce us to your friends in the Academy? I believe that it will also be convenient for them with our capability.」

Miranda-san shook her head.

「It seems that you have confidence but, there is also a period of time when the academy students cannot enter the dungeon at all. Besides, if it's my acquaintances then many of them have the same circumstances as me.」

This is troubling. It's true we would be able to enter, but it seemed the condition would be tougher than we thought.

Sophia-san also looked troubled and mentioned Clara-san's name.

「This is completely different from what Clara-san told us. Certainly we will be able to enter in this way but, how should I say it, it's inconvenient like this……」

Then Miranda-san was a bit surprised.

「Clara? Could it be, the supporter Clara Bulmer?」

Aria-san nodded.

「That's right. For Miranda to know her too, is she famous? She didn't look like it though.」

「Aa~, how should I say it……she is famous in various senses. She is called with nicknames like the library's lord or fairy. Also, that girl is an excellent supporter. Because she is excellent, I heard that the guild often introduced her to the students entering the dungeon. Perhaps that's why she is misunderstanding.」

Novem tilted her head.

「Misunderstanding?」

「Yes. She got introduced to students and entered the dungeon really often, so she might misunderstand that all the students can enter the dungeon as they like all the time. There are also people like that. Those who are doing nothing but challenging the dungeon rather than attending the class despite enrolling into the Academy. I'm not acquainted with that kind of student. Or rather……they are people that you don't want to get close with.」

It seemed that the students who Clara-san saw were nothing but the problematic bunch. The proper students were busy studying in the Academy, so they couldn't challenge the dungeon frequently.

Miranda-san explained the situation to us in detail.

「There are also those among them who are working part-time jobs or side jobs at home in order to pay for the tuition or their living expenses though. But, as expected the dungeon is where you can earn the most money. Tuition, money for having fun……most people want the money to have fun. Can you work hard together with the kind of people who enter the dungeon in order to earn money for having fun?」

All of us shook our heads.

「Though sometimes there are also those who are working hard to pay for their tuition because the condition of their house is worsening. The Academy will also support that kind of student and introduce them to good adventurers.」

Based from what we heard, it seemed difficult for us to enter the dungeon.

The Fourth sighed.

『The circumstances here in Arumsaas are complicated. There is no way this topic will be spread to the outside. Even if this kind of story got spread out, I don't think that most people will be able to understand it without coming here themselves.』

Due to Arumsaas's unique circumstances, not many people would understand it even if rumors and the true state of affairs of this place got spread. Like this it couldn't be helped that we didn't realize the true state of affairs in Arumaas before coming here. This was the reason why it was called as a really strange or mysterious place.

Miranda-san made a suggestion to us while I was harboring such impression.

「And so, I have a suggestion……everyone has confidence in your strength right?」

Miranda-san made a smile like a child who thought of a prank. We nodded. No, I didn't understand what kind of strength she was looking for but, the four of us weren't weak.

「Everyone……do you want to try accepting a professor's request here?」

Her suggestion was about accomplishing a request from a professor who held authority in the Academy.

.

—The house of the Circry sisters.

Miranda was extremely cheerful when she returned home.

She told Shannon what happened today.

「Do you remember Shannon? You know, Aria who once played together with us at the mansion's garden. Aria Lockwarde, she is actually came here to Arumsaas.」

Shannon dimly recalled hearing Aria's name.

There were a lot of noble daughters who came playing at the mansion, but the number of people who would play with Shannon could be counted in one hand.

(Aa~, come to think of it there was someone like that.)

「Yes, I remember her a bit. She was a girl who said her hair is red wasn't it?」

「Yes! I heard she was expelled from Centralle but, it's a relief that she is alright.」

Miranda was acting cheerful.

「And then you see, after this we will accept a professor's request together—」

However, even though she went out this morning saying that she would meet with Lyle, she was only talking about Aria and other things when she returned. Shannon understood.

(Something must have happened. Then, perhaps I should ask her to tell me.)

When Miranda turned her back on Shannon and started her cooking preparations, Shannon read Miranda's emotions and her lips twisted.

(I see……she is sad. You are really sad aren't you, Onee-sama)

Shannon manipulated the magic power drifting around Miranda that was showing her sad emotions. Miranda twitched in reaction and stood still. Shannon hugged her from behind.

「Aha! Geez Onee-sama, you are weakening that you can be controlled by me. You are sad aren't you, Onee-sama?」

The color of Miranda's eyes lost its light from Shannon's words. Emotion was vanishing from her face. Her mouth slowly moved.

「……Sa, sad?」

「That's right. Onee-sama, you are feeling really sad. What happened?」

Miranda slowly told Shannon. What was sad……why she was weakening to the degree that Shannon's mind control worked on her.

「Lyle said……that he doesn't like me. He has a lot of other girls……even though……even though……I was happy that he invited me」

Shannon stifled her laugh and then she said to Miranda.

「Lyle is really horrible. Onee-sama, then you should—」

「No, no way. Such thing is no good……」

Shannon clicked her tongue seeing Miranda shaking her head. There wasn't any sign of the transient looking girl there. Shannon was irritated and cursed at Miranda.

「Onee-sama is always like that, telling yourself that you are in the wrong, that you have to endure it. That selfless thinking is really admirable, how praiseworthy. Onee-sama is also feeling responsible and running after me because of that too aren't you?」

Miranda weakly answered.

「I was, worried for you……」

「Hmm~……but you know, you're really sad aren't you? Normally no matter how much I tried to control Onee-sama, you would resist and wouldn't say anything, and yet today you are answering my questions like this.」

When Miranda fell silent, Shannon dispelled the mind control because she didn't want to burden Miranda.

(I have to spend time to slowly complete the control. But, that man called Lyle……he is making me angry. He hurt my Onee-sama. But, thanks to him Onee-sama has become really obedient.)

For Shannon, Miranda was her big sister, yet at the same time she was also like a replacement to her mother who died right after she was born. While Shannon felt strong familial love towards her, the betrayed feeling made her harbor a mixed feeling of love and hate towards Miranda.

(That's right. I'll use Onee-sama like this and make Lyle—)

Miranda returned to her senses and gasped when Shannon separated from her.

「E, eh? I was—」

「Onee-sama, what's the matter?」

Miranda turned around because Shannon called her from behind. Shannon smiled at Miranda, and then she adorably acted like a transient looking little sister.

「Shannon?」

「Yes. And, what happened with Aria-san after that?」

Miranda pressed her left hand on her face. And then she noticed that she was sweating.

「I'm sorry. It looks like I'm a bit tired, so I'll go wash my face.」

Shannon saw off Miranda who left the kitchen with a hand wave—

.

The next day.

I visited the library where Clara-san was at. It was a famous library in Arumsaas. As expected from a library that claimed to be number one on the continent, it was a building that was like a palace.

When I stood still in front of the building that was so high I needed to look up to it, the people who were passing around me chuckled. Surely they were thinking that I was a country bumpkin.

But, the reaction inside the Jewel was even more amazing than that.

『What's this! What's this-! This is a place that keeps books isn't it! That means, there are so many books filling up a place this big!』

The Third threw away his usual easygoing attitude in excitement and continued to be noisy.

The Seventh was trying to calm him down.

『Please shut up already. Wai-! This idiot, don't struggle! So, someone help!』

The Jewel was noisy from several people holding down the Third.

「……Let's enter inside.」

I ignored the noisy Jewel and entered into the library that was like a palace. There was a reception right after the entrance. Several female receptionists were lining up.

I headed towards one of them and she gave me guidance when I told her that this was my first time here.

She said that I would need to pay first for the registration. The money would be set aside for compensation in case I lost a book. I was told that the money would be returned when the registration was cancelled without any incident.

I nodded when I heard that a copper coin would be necessary each time I was to use the library and paid the registration fee.

「By the way, do you know where Clara-san is?」

The receptionist seemed to be reluctant to answer my question.

「I cannot answer that kind of question.」

It seemed I was troubling her.

「I'm sorry. Please forget it.」

I finished the registration and received a member card for the library, then I walked inside the library.

The inside of the building was divided into several rooms. Every room had a lot of books lined up.

The ceiling was high. Many bookshelves that reached until the height of that ceiling were lined up. Every shelf was stuffed with books to the brim.

「This isn't just several thousands of books, could it be the number reach tens or even hundreds of thousands?」

Thinking from the scale of the building that I saw from the outside, surely it was storing a great amount of books. While I was walking and peering in here and there like that, I found a girl with an artificial hand walking into a room.

「Clara-san.」

Clara-san turned her gaze towards me when I called out to her.

「I never thought that I would meet you in this kind of place, Lyle-san.」

「I have something to talk with you. It's a job matter.」

「You came until the library just to talk about work? Well, it's fine. Please come this way.」

Clara-san changed her direction away from the room she was going to enter. She brought me not into a room but to a wide passage.

There were tables and chairs placed near the huge window. A plank written with 'rest area' was hung up.

There was also a door that connected to the garden nearby.

「We can also eat here. We also won't be scolded even if we talk a bit louder here.」

Clara-san said that and sat down. I sat on the chair in front of her and we sat with the table between us before I broached into the main topic.

「Actually, we are going to accept the request from an academy professor—Damien Valle.」

Hearing that Clara-san turned her gaze towards her artificial right arm for an instant.

「He was the one who put up a request asking for the magic stone from the boss of the underground 40th floor isn't it? Seeing that you are bringing this talk to me, has the problem of entering the dungeon been solved?」

I shook my head.

「No. We found someone who would enter together with us, but that person also has her own daily life to think about. It seems that the academy students who are frequently entering the dungeon are delinquents. The normal students won't enter the dungeon that often.」

When I said that, Clara-san took off her glasses and wiped the lenses while looking down. I got the feeling that her face was reddening. It seemed she noticed her own misunderstanding.

「……It seems I had a misunderstanding. I apologize. And, you are talking to me looking for a supporter aren't you? How big is the scale of the party that you are thinking about?」

Asked that I counted with my fingers.

「Err~, four people from my place, and then the academy student Miranda-san, and also Clara-san.」

Clara-san put on her glasses and then her sleepy looking eyes opened wide until the limit.

「Are you sane? I once also participated in conquering floor B30 but, at that time the party that challenged it numbered nearly 50 people. If you are going to floor B40, I heard that you will need twice the number of that.」

When conquering a large scale dungeon, fundamentally the party would be staying inside overnight. In that case, a human would need to eat and also sleep. They would also get dirty and needed to pee and defecate.

In most dungeons, it would become harder the deeper you progressed.

The more the number of days was spent to conquer the dungeon, the more the amount of supplies that would be needed.

Food and water, and then the carrier to transport those would be absolutely necessary.

The dungeon wasn't so kind that you would be able to fight and advance forward while carrying heavy luggage.

A supporter was necessary no matter what in order for the fighting adventurers to display their usual strength.

As a result, it was common for the number of necessary personnel to increase the deeper you were trying to go.

I nodded and then told Clara-san that I wanted to form a contract with her.

「We have a method to conquer a dungeon. Well, the secret weapon for it is this.」

Clara-san narrowed her eyes when I lightly lifted up the Jewel hanging on my neck.

「A Gem is it? Furthermore blue is the color of support. ……I will withdraw in the middle if I think that it's reckless. If you are fine with that then I will agree to form a contract. Also」

「Also?」

「I want to ask one thing. Did Lyle-san register to the library in order to meet me?」

I answered honestly.

「Ah, that's not it. No, how should I say it……I also like books, so I'll still register here anyways. But today I came here to meet Clara-san.

After all I heard that you are always in the library except for when you're working.」

Clara-san smiled slightly. It seemed she was pleased with my answer.

「I see. That's great. I also like people who like books. Then, let's talk about the contract. I am a quite capable supporter, so the cost will also be quite high.」

I shrugged while saying.

「That's why I'm inviting you. It will be troubling if that's not the case.」

The Fourth spoke with a slightly troubled voice.

『Even though I understand that it's not the case, but the exchange just now sounded like a confession of love. Even though they are only talking about a work contract.』

The Third made fun of me.

『Lyle is like that isn't he. Your normal act might be attracting girls more effectively, than when you actually try to hit on them.』

Spare me from that. I formed a contract with Clara-san while thinking that.

.

「Lyle, over here!」

Miranda-san waved her hand energetically.

I left the library and then immediately headed towards the next place of appointment.

「It's great that the library and the Academy are both at the center of the city, making it convenient.」

Miranda-san chuckled when I said that.

「About that, the dungeon, the Academy and the library are the three most famous products of Arumsaas after all.」

The way she called them famous products was a bit funny. Besides, the reason why they were at the center of the city wasn't explained but, such thing didn't matter.

「Famous products is it? Then it can't be helped.」

I met up with Miranda-san at the Academy's entrance, then she guided me towards a building to meet with Professor Damien through a corridor.

There I listened to a simple explanation from Miranda-san about Professor Damien.

「The Academy's seven best? Is it referring to something like, the seven amazing people of the Academy?」

She said that Professor Damien was one of the famous seven best of the Academy.

「That's not it. I think it's something like the problem children since the Academy started. They aren't just problem children though. They are exceptionally superior in their field and also brought benefit to Arumsaas, but they are like eccentrics who are only interested in their research and also often cause problems? Anyway, when counted there were seven people like that. That's why the seven best. I think Professor Damien is the only one who is still alive.」

The Second seemed dissatisfied after hearing such an explanation.

『Oi, will that person really be alright? It feels like it's someone who is no good as a person though?』

The Fourth pondered slightly before answering.

『Without trying to meet him first……I won't be able to say anything.』

We were going to create a connection with the Academy by accomplishing the request that such problem child sent to the guild.

The Seventh was considering the whole rather than Professor Damien personally.

『Well, obeying the idiots in the guild like now is also irritating. It's not a bad way to obtain connections with the Academy here to shut up the guild. Besides, this chance can be used to get closer with Miranda. Damien himself doesn't really matter isn't it?』

The Fifth and the Sixth were silent, but from the Jewel I could feel that they were paying attention to Miranda-san who was walking in front of me.

「Lyle, it's here.」

When we arrived at the destination room, Miranda-san rang the bell that was set up beside the door. A loud sound resounded through the whole corridor. When the sound stopped, Miranda-san called out towards the door.

「Professor Damien, it's Miranda. I brought an adventurer here who will accept your request just as promised.」

After a while, a sound of things breaking came from inside the room. Then there were sounds like something getting dragged and something being pushed away before the door slowly opened.

I turned my gaze below and saw a small statured male.

「E, excuse me—」

A petite man wearing glasses. His brown hair was unkempt and he was wearing a white coat above his wrinkled and dirty clothes, but even that white coat was terribly dirty.

From a glance he looked like a young man, but this person was a professor. A person with a position that had a say even in the management of Arumsaas city.

Professor Damien stopped me with his hand when I was going to talk.

「Aa~, sorry. It will be a waste of time so let's go to the reception room. There will also be tea there so it's convenient. We'll talk about the request there. Ah, no need for self-introduction too. I'm really not good at remembering people's names.」

A sudden rude attitude. He went out of the room and walked away without stopping.

When I looked at Miranda-san, she shrugged and smiled.

「Professor acts like that to everyone. Don't worry……he also doesn't remember my name after all. But, there is no doubt that he's an amazing person.」

Even the ancestors inside the Jewel were dumbfounded at the attitude of Professor Damien.

When we arrived at the reception room, a person who seemed to be an academy staff member served the tea with a really displeased face.

Professor Damian reached towards a small jar that was filled with sugar……and poured in a lot of sugar into his cup.

A drink that was mostly made from sugar was finished.

He drank it like it was nothing. Just from looking made the inside of my mouth feel sweet.

Professor Damian started talking after moistening (?) his mouth.

「First there is no need for introductions. You two already know my name. And then I don't feel like remembering your name so it's pointless. I hate pointless things. That's why, start talking about the main topic right away. Even though I've sent the request to the guild since a long time ago, it's still not accomplished even after half a year. Even though I urged them many times already, the other side kept making various excuses saying that it's impossible. I don't want to waste time pointlessly like that anymore.」

It seemed the excuse of the guild was that an adventurer party that could advance until floor B30 was already really few in number. A party that could challenge floor B40 was even rarer.

But, Professor Damian wouldn't care even if I said that, so I kept quiet.

Or rather, it seemed that it was true that there was no excellent adventurers like that in Arumsaas right now.

「The girl there made a suggestion to me in that situation. She knew adventurers who could conquer floor B40. But, they had only just arrived in Arumsaas, so they want recommendations to be able to enter the dungeon. That was what she said. I too had done adventurer-like things several times before. I had also entered the dungeon, and I also have experience fighting monsters when going out to investigate. But, this is outside of my expertise. I also am

unable to understand someone's true strength just from looking. I want you to show me the basis that it's possible for you to complete my request.」

Professor Damian's worry was only natural.

Let's talk honestly here. When I thought that and grabbed the Jewel, the Second agreed with my opinion.

『There won't be any progress like this so teach him. Also don't forget to forbid him to tell others just in case.』

I nodded and then I showed the Jewel in my hand to Professor Damian.

「A Gem huh. It's rare but, you understand that it in itself doesn't have any worth don't you?」

「Yes. This Je……Gem has the Arts of my family engraved into it. The Arts I can use are five. They are Support Types with abundant variety. It will display its strength without fail even in a dungeon. Its ability is—」

Professor Damian grinned when he heard my explanation.

The Arts of the ancestors were called Support Type. This type had no offensive power unlike the red Gem or yellow Gem. But, it had ability that didn't lose against them.

「I see. The first and the second are already good but, the third's speed increase, the fourth's area map and the fifth's enemy search are especially good……indeed, the dungeon's capture will become really easy if you are there. No, it's fine to even call you an expert. I see, certainly you are suited for this request.」

「I will be troubled if this information is leaked to other people though.」

「Aa, there is that kind of rule isn't it. You are going to fulfill my request. There is no meaning in making you my enemy. I won't leak your secret. Well then, I'll add more conditions to the request.」

I narrowed my eyes.

「Conditions?」

Professor Damian smiled. He leaned on the sofa's back and continued talking.

「Don't look that wary. I will also pay the reward for this addition. I will also enter the dungeon so I want you to guard me. I can protect myself with my own strength though. By the way, with me there the battle potential will undoubtedly increase.」

Miranda-san nodded when I looked at her. There was no doubt at all in her expression.

「It's true. Professor Damian is strong. His nickname is Puppet User. He used this magic called "Golem" magic that he developed by himself to move several puppets at the same time like his own limbs. His skill in magic is also reliable. There is no doubt that he will be useful in battle.」

I pondered for a bit and nodded. Professor Damian laughed.

「That's great. I'm tired of waiting already. Besides I have finished preparing. Moving by myself is better than waiting here. I was about to aim for floor B40 by myself if no one was going to complete my request.」

It didn't sound like a joke. And then, Professor Damian continued.

「Also about the reward, I don't mind if your party takes all the magic stones and materials we obtain from inside the dungeon. And the reward from me will be……an item with equal value to several thousand gold coins, is that alright with you?」

I was a bit curious at the way Professor Damian said it.

「An item with equal value to several thousand gold coins?」

「They won't give me the budget after I used up my research fund. Even if they told me to show results, I need the magic stone in order to show that result so the budget won't come out no matter how long time passed. That's why, I want to pay you with goods.」

I was troubled hearing that. Even if he said that it was an item with equal value to several thousand gold coins, I didn't know what kind of object it was. Besides would I be able to use such thing after receiving it? Would it be sellable? The Fourth advised me while I was falling into thought.

『Accept it. You should be able to have surplus financially from the magic stones and materials share. Also you mustn't forget your first objective. The permission to enter the dungeon. If you can obtain it then there isn't really any problem.』

On the contrary, it would be a loss if I felt dissatisfied with the reward and didn't accept this request here.

『I understand. However, please absolutely don't forget about giving us the mediation for permission to enter the dungeon.』

Professor Damian was laughing.

「Leave it to me. Even like this I have a talking relationship with the headmaster after all. Well, you can also say that it's only me often

getting scolded in regards to the budget though. Now then, the additional reward is this.」

Professor Damian lifted the sugar jar on his right hand and a small puppet made from sugar came out from it.

It lifted the lid and showed its face. After a while it returned inside the jar and closed the lid.

「The students often asked me to teach it to them, so I teach them to earn some extra money. The additional reward will be me teaching you this magic.」

That was a really interesting magic. I was also interested and nodded in acceptance of that condition.

Professor Damian smiled.

「Yosh, the contract is formed. When will we depart? For me……I want two days to prepare.」

I nodded thinking that we could prepare if we had that much time.

「Then, we will depart three days later so please take care of the formalities.」

Professor Damian was in a good mood.

「Nice, it's nice. It's great that we don't waste time with complicated talk. It's best if everything is simple. It will be great if everything is resolved simply like this time.」

It seemed what Miranda-san said that he had no interest in anything other than his own research was true.

The Fourth gave his evaluation of Damian Valle.

『Sometimes there will be a person like this, a human who displays amazing capability only in their specialized subject. Damian is also that kind of human. It can also be said that he is the ultimate form of that kind of person.』

The Seventh also understood it.

『He is someone who cannot be entrusted to do anything else. I also had that kind of subordinate in my time. That person wasn't so terrible to this degree though.』

The Academy's professor, Damien Valle—he was a really intense character.

Chapter 47 – Preparation

In a shop that adventurers utilized.

I, who was talking with the owner there, asked him to prepare most of the things we needed.

With the existence of the underground dungeon here, there were several shops that sold all the necessary supplies to enter it.

「Two weeks for seven people's share? How should I say it, this is unusual.」

Novem who was accompanying me tilted her head at the owner's words.

「Unusual?」

「Yeah, you're going to enter the dungeon right? I won't think anything of it if you were going outside, but if you're going to enter the dungeon with seven people, then even the longest would usually be only three or four days. It's unusual to stay for two weeks in the dungeon with that number of people. You guys aren't going to do anything reckless are you? I understand your feelings of wanting to rush because you are young but……」

I turned towards the worried shop owner and shook my head.

「No way. We finally got this chance to enter the dungeon, so we are thinking to get used to it using this chance, that's all.」

The owner scratched his head with a worried look.

「That's fine if that's it but……you guys are paying customers, so I'll prepare the items properly by the promised date. Get back safely you guys.」

Novem and I said our thanks and left the shop.

This shop was near the outer wall and the dust was terrible from the morning.

I covered my mouth and walked towards the next shop.

「Aria-san and Sophia-san are having tea with Miranda-san?」

Novem nodded in reply to my question.

「Yes. I turned down the invitation because I'm accompanying Lyle-sama, but it seems the three of them are getting along well. It's because in the first place Miranda-san was close with Aria-san, and Aria-san right now is also close with Sophia-san.」

I tried speaking reservedly to Novem.

「Yo, you should also go have tea together with them.」

Then Novem shook her head.

「Lyle-sama, will you be able to go shopping by yourself? Just now you were also going to buy everything in one shop because the price was cheap.」

「……I'm sorry.」

「No, you don't need to apologize to me. That, I'm saying that it's better to do this with two people rather than just alone.」

Novem's smile was really painful to look at.

There was a shop that put a sign at its storefront stating that they could provide everything at a cheap price, so we tried taking a look inside. The shop owner who was really welcoming and amiable recommended his products to us. When I was going to purchase exactly what he offered, Novem stopped me. When we inspected the

merchandise really carefully, shockingly, although the food wasn't rotten but they were in terrible condition. The amount was also few and even if we ordered the share of seven people, it would only be enough for six people or perhaps even five.

I almost got tricked there. The Third was provoking me.

『Lyle is unreliable, so Novem-chan can't go have fun. I think you better think hard about this. You're really unreliable Lyle~』

It was vexing but I couldn't say anything back.

A lot of the shops that catered towards adventurers were located near the outer wall and guild, because of that we immediately arrived at the next destination.

We entered a narrow alley and found an entrance ahead of us. It was a shop that handled armor related goods and services.

When we were about to enter, a person who looked like an Academy student came out from it. The person was female and her face looked really tired. We heard her muttering when we passed by each other.

「Why was it a failure……haa, I'm barely scraping by this month too.」

I was curious at her words regarding failure, but we continued towards the shop.

The place was even more cramped than the shop at Dalien. Armors were lined up until the limit inside the cramped shop. A demi-human gnome who grew a moustache greeted us. He seemed to be the shop owner. He looks like a child with his short and slender body.

「Welcome.」

The owner was tidying up arrows that were lined up on the counter when we came in. His handling of the arrows was really careful. I was curious and asked him.

「What are those arrows?」

The owner's hand stopped. And then he made a slightly troubled smile and answered.

「Aa, this is a burst arrow. It's the so called magic arrow you see. Here, look at this arrowhead.」

When I looked closer, the material wasn't metal but something like clay.

Novem seemed to notice something. She put her hands on her mouth in a bit of a surprise.

「This sparkling light, is it a magic stone? Does it have smashed magic stones kneaded into it?」

The owner looked at Novem in surprise. And then he became all smiles and started talking talkatively.

「So you get it! Yes, this thing has magic stones and other things kneaded into a special clay. But you see……originally this thing is created with the purpose to increase the power by generating fire or causing wind, but the products that are brought here are only failed creations. Though it's given an exaggerated name like burst arrow.」

The owner took off one arrowhead and threw it towards some thick metal scraps some distance away. When the arrowhead hit the trash box that was sooty inside, there was an explosion sound *pon* and smoke came out. The Seventh was interested. The Second was also the same.

『Ho, how……amazing-! It's problematic that it's a bow and arrow but, if the arrowhead is gathered and explosive—』

『Stupid idiot! It's great because it's a bow and arrow! With this thing, a bow and arrow will be even more useful!』

The Seventh was interested in the explosion, but the Second was interested in the existence of magic arrows because his own weapon was a bow and arrow. The owner looked slightly dejected.

「As you can see, it explodes and that's it. It's quite strong but, it's a dud.」

Novem was looking at the magic arrow seriously. My interest was also attracted to the magic arrow—burst arrow.

「But it's amazing. Surely it would be useful if this arrow was gathered in a large amount.」

The owner explained the flaw of a burst arrow.

「I won't recommend that. It's a dud no matter how you look at it. The power is also not stable. Besides, transporting them is really troublesome. Normal arrows can be quickly shot consecutively. But, this thing will explode if the arrowheads collides with each other, and it will also explode from any strong impact. It will explode too if it becomes too hot. Anyway, it explodes too easily. It's useful but it's dangerous to bring them around in large amount.」

The Seventh and the Second were disappointed.

『What, so it cannot be manufactured huh. However, if the way to make it is understood……』

『Who is going to use this scary arrow that will explode in your hand huh? It will be fine if the user is skilled but……it's too difficult if you

also have to be careful not to explode it while the enemy comes near. It also looks like it cannot be fired rapidly.』

It seemed the arrow would explode just from collision or getting stepped on.

Certainly, I would want to refuse if I was told to walk around while carrying a lot of such arrows.

The owner showed us the tool to store this special arrow. It was a type of item to store every single arrow carefully. The arrow was put into a long and narrow box one by one and then got fixed in place. Inside there was several layers of fur placed around the arrow to become a cushion.

「Honestly, you still cannot feel relieved even after putting the arrow inside this. What's more, it's really troublesome to take it out one by one.」

The burst arrow was really troublesome. But the Seventh seemed to think of something while I was thinking like that.

『Lyle. Perhaps this thing can be used well if using my Art.』

The Third was also getting interested.

『Aa, now that you mention it this is a good chance so I'll also teach my Art. Teaching the Art itself is simple but, the problem will be in how to use it. I'll teach you at this chance.』

It seemed the two would finally teach me their Arts.

.

—The place was a stylish café.

Both Aria and Sophia were slightly nervous at the high class atmosphere.

Many of the customers around them were woman with pretty and elegant attire. There were also men, but everyone was accompanied by woman. The rank of this establishment was definitely higher by one or two steps compared to the café they usually visited.

Sophia visited such a café because she was invited by Aria. More accurately, Aria who was invited by Miranda invited Sophia and Novem. Novem didn't come because she was accompanying Lyle.

Aria looked around restlessly.

「Hey, is it okay for adventurers to come here? Like, I heard that Arumsaas is cold towards adventurers.」

Sophia also recalled a certain incident. On their first day in Arumsaas, when they entered an inn searching for a place to stay, they were chased out because the place refused adventurers. It couldn't be helped that she was worried after such thing happened.

「That's right. It will be inexcusable if we cause trouble for Miranda-san.」

Then Miranda laughed.

「You two are worrying too much. Besides, my backer is the academy and my house that is a Viscount house. I'll lodge a complaint if we are chased out because of such reason. In the first place, the two of you are also former nobles aren't you?」

Sophia shook her head.

「My house was abolished after causing a problem. Besides, my house was just a Vassal Knight house.」

Miranda smiled.

「Don’t depreciate yourself. It doesn’t matter if it was a Vassal Knight, a noble is a noble.」

Miranda said that and drank her tea.

Sophia felt like she was slightly saved by those words. She also drank her tea. As expected from a pricey tea, it was delicious.

Miranda broached a topic.

「Hey, come to think of it we will be working together after this but, I don’t really know about everyone. That’s why, can you tell me what you can do?」

Aria said 「That’s true」 and started talking about herself.

「I’m a vanguard and use a spear. For magic……I’m in the middle of training.」

Sophia continued the explanation.

「I mostly can’t use magic. I’m using a battle axe that is a heirloom of my house but, I also use small axes other than that.」

Miranda was listening to the two’s story with deep interest.

「Hee……then, what about Novem-san?」

Aria talked about Novem.

「Novem is a really amazing magician. She can use any magic skillfully. Miranda is also skilled but, perhaps Novem is the one more skilled in magic. She is working hard in her magic specialty.」

Miranda looked happy hearing that.

「My, that's great. She seems reliable. Unlike her I am a jack of all trades after all.」

Sophia followed up for her in hurry.

「The, there is no such thing. It's already praiseworthy that you are able to use magic.」

「Thank you. But, the two of you can also use Arts correct? I haven't manifested any Art, so I'm inferior to the two of you in regards to that. ……And, what about Lyle-kun?」

Aria and Sophia looked at each other. They were wondering how much they could talk about it. Then Miranda solved the misunderstanding of the two.

「Ah, it's fine. I have heard about his Arts when he explained to Professor Damian. What I'm concerned of is if someone like me who doesn't know anything is going to be a hindrance to Lyle-kun. You know, it will be bad if I'm being a hindrance when he is using his Arts isn't it?」

Aria was relieved hearing that.

「Then it's fine. That guy can do anything after all. You're worried that you might become an hindrance but……he can do anything by himself.」

Sophia also felt that. Lyle would grasp the surrounding terrain by himself, he would also search and detect enemies, and on top of that his combat ability was also the best among the four of them.

Novem was a magic specialist but, Lyle was able to do both close quarter combat and magic skillfully.

Sophia spoke about that.

「He is a really amazing person. Certainly, sometimes he also has this stupid side to him but, he is calmer than anyone in a dangerous situation. Compared to him we are really—」

Aria was also hanging her head down. Even though they wanted to be useful, they were unable to do so. They felt vexed towards themselves who were like that. Miranda spoke to the two of them.

「Then both of you—can work harder at what you can do. It's that you know, doing the best you can in the areas you are able to, while leaving the rest to others. I think it's better that way. The two of you have amazing Arts right? I'm jealous.」

Seeing the smiling face of Miranda, Aria and Sophia thought that certainly, if they worked hard at what they could do then—

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The night of that day.

I was told to come into the Jewel. The Third and the Seventh led me through a memory door. The memory door was located behind the chair of each ancestor. By entering inside, I was able to learn what each ancestor had seen or felt.

And then right now I entered into the memory door of the Seventh.

The reason was to learn the Art of the Third and the Seventh. Each Art had 3 forms, from first stage until the third stage. The Art became more powerful by advancing through the stages, but originally a Gem would teach the name of the Art and how to use it to the user.

However, a simple Gem would stop there. If the user didn't know the name of the Art from the second stage onward, and they also didn't

know the way to use the Art, the Gem wouldn't let the user use any further Art than that.

When the Gem became a Jewel, the memories of the Art owners would be resurrected into the appearance of their golden age and they would teach the user the names and the way to use their Arts.

Yes—the ancestors in front of me. They were resurrected memories, not the actual people.

While I was thinking about various things, the Seventh chose the Walt House's mansion—its courtyard.

There was engraving everywhere inside the large mansion. The whole building was also decorated. It was mostly the same with the mansion that was in my memory.

The Third whistled and spoke his impression to the Seventh.

『The mansion has become really extravagant. This doesn't look like the mansion of a Count at all. ……Yeah, it feels like the mansion of a Duke. Did grandpa work hard for the sake of you grandson? No, perhaps it was for your great grandson?』

The Seventh cleared his throat at the Third's teasing.

『……It was decided that someday we would receive royal bloodline and become a Duke house. There would be a gap in my son's time and then Lyle or the generation after him would definitely become a duke. It should be like that. I was only making preparations.』

I was under the impression that the mansion of a Count was like this because all that time I was staying in the mansion. But, it seemed this mansion was too big for a Count house.

The Third fell into thought.

『If I remember right, the wife of the Seventh had the bloodline of the previous royal family you said? It's also related with this isn't it?』

『That's right. Well, it's a fact that this mansion was also because of my wife Zenoire's strong demand. From the size of our territory we are able to introduce ourselves as a Duke or Archduke without anyone complaining about it after all.』

The Sixth energetically grabbed the surrounding territories and expanded the territory of the Walt House drastically. The scale of that territory was only second to the royal family of Bahnseim.

The Third folded his hands.

『Why wasn't our house crushed? From the royal family's perspective, hasn't our house already gone past being troublesome and straight to being dangerous? Your wife was the survivor of a family that took arms against the royal family right?』

My grandmother. The Seventh's wife, Zenoire, came from a family that went against the Bahnseim royal family. Even though at first there was talk of marriage with the Bahnseim royal family in order to let bygones be bygones, it seemed that in the middle the family picked a fight.

However, the precious bloodline—the bloodline of a noble was the bloodline of a magician itself. There was no way the bloodline could be allowed to disappear, so the Seventh welcomed Zenoire-obaasama as his wife.

……Thinking carefully, it wouldn't even be strange for our house to be crushed by the royal family. Certainly it was just like the Third said, our house was too dangerous.

The Seventh let out a long sigh.

『……The Sixth skillfully made the arrangements in that area. Certainly, the main faction of capital nobles at that time regarded the Walt House as dangerous. They were thinking to whittle our territory or even to attack and destroy us. The Sixth who noticed that attacked the feudal lords who were backing the main faction of that time and destroyed them. He also sent money to the faction opposing the main faction.』

The Third's eyes opened wide.

『Eh, what? He kicked down the main faction of the capital nobles?』

The Seventh shrugged and answered.

『At that time it was chaotic everywhere. It was money and strength that ruled in the country.』

It was a really unpleasant era. But, the Sixth overcame such difficulty and won the peace of the Walt House. It seemed the Seventh inherited that flow of events.

『Well, because of that we were also recruited to fight a war that wasn't beneficial at all but, I think from the results it was alright. Oops, we got off topic.』

That's right. The main topic was me learning Arts.

The Third also nodded and the two of them put their hand on my shoulders each. When they closed their eyes, my body was enveloped in a gentle blue light.

The name of the Arts surfaced in my mind. I also comprehended the way to use them.

「……Mind and, Box?」

The two's hand left me then the Seventh explained about the Art first.

『Yes, it's convenient that the Art is handed down just by doing this. Well, in my time there was only images flowing into me from the Jewel though……. Now then, I'll show Lyle my Art, Box.』

When the Seventh snapped his finger, a magic circle emerged on the ground right under us. It had a size that could surround us with some room to spare.

Before long several guns were slowly rising up from the magic circle. The Seventh took one of them and grinned.

『My Art is also designated as a space type. It can store tools and the like in this way. This Art is amazing. Almost everything other than living things can be stored inside, and the freshness also won't change from the time it's inserted.』

The Third and I gave applause hearing that.

It was a really amazing Art. But, it bothered me why it wasn't taught to me until now.

The Third asked about the circumstance of that.

『And, it also has a demerit right? Seeing that you didn't teach it until now.』

When the Seventh snapped his fingers, the guns were absorbed back into the magic circle and then they vanished. At the end the magic circle also vanished, and then only the gun in the Seventh's hand was remaining.

『……Well, it's simply that the mana consumption is high. Even the current Lyle will only barely manage.』

He said that I would barely manage but, after experiencing Growth once, I managed to obtain quite a lot of leeway with my mana. Previously I would faint just from the ancestors making a ruckus inside the Jewel. I believed that I had really grown when thinking back to that.

……However, I didn't want to experience "Growth" anymore.

The Seventh looked at me and said 「Try it」.

「Then」

I tried snapping my fingers like the Seventh. After learning the method to use this I thought, this action of snapping a finger wasn't really necessary.

A magic circle emerged around me.

But, the size of the magic circle was far smaller than the Seventh's.

The Seventh muttered after seeing that size.

『This size has the capacity of two or three carts I think? But four carts is impossible.』

The Third crouched down and stared at my magic circle.

『Hmm~, it's smaller than the Seventh's. Will this grow bigger later?』

The Seventh nodded.

『Well, it depends on the user's mana. In Lyle's case, there is no problem with his technique of using the Art.』

The Third was also convinced.

『Lyle is amazing at that point. He can use our Arts without any effort at all.』

I didn't understand what they were telling me.

「I've been taught the way to use the Arts so, isn't it natural that I can do it?」

The Seventh made a really conflicted look.

『You and also Maizel, why are you two like this……well, doesn't matter. Then, next is the Third's turn. Ah, before that』

Maizel……father's name was mentioned. I looked down. Seeing that the Third and also the Seventh each made a troubled face.

No matter what it felt painful recalling about my family.

The Seventh looked at me and said 「Erase the magic circle」, so I snapped my fingers. Then the magic circle vanished, but at the same time I felt quite a lot of mana disappearing from my body.

The consumption that was too drastic and the unexpected fatigue from it made me fall to my knee. I put my hand on the lawn and calmed down my disordered breathing.

『Aa~, this is certainly dangerous. When using it, you have to check that there is no enemy nearby first. If not it will be scary to use it.』

It was convenient, but thinking of the mana consumption, the most I could use it in a day was two times. That too was only if I used it the first thing in the morning and didn't do anything after that to recover my mana before using it once more at night.

In practice the limit of using it was once a day.

『Now then, next is my turn. Then, it's nice that Lyle is tired right now so let's try using it on you while we are at it. My Art Mind, to put it bluntly its convenience of usage is bad compared to other Arts.』

The Seventh muttered in a small voice at the Third's assertion.

『Liar, this wily guy.』

The Third seemed to hear that, but he ignored the Seventh and continued talking.

『Even if my Art is used normally, a lot of people will resist it and it won't have any effect. That's why, there is an important prerequisite to use it. that is making the opponent tired or feeling confused mentally beforehand. Just like Lyle right now.』

It seemed the Third had used his Art, but I didn't know what it was doing.

「E, eh? Third? Seventh?」

Even when I looked around, I couldn't find the two. But, in exchange a single person—Celes was there. She was chuckling scornfully and approached me.

「Stop. Don't come……don't comeee!」

Celes laughed at my voice.

『Ahahaha, how unsightly! You are crawling on the ground and even screaming pathetically……you, just die already.』

At the end Celes expressionlessly declared with a really low and terrifying voice, then before I noticed she was taking a stance with her favorite rapier. When the tip of the rapier approached until before my eyes, someone tapped my shoulder.

「……Eh?」

The Third's face was there.

『Yaa. Did you see a good dream?』

I grimaced at that sarcasm and answered with a dissatisfied look. The Seventh was also exasperated and warned the Third.

『That's overdoing it.』

However the Third spoke bluntly.

『It's important to experience it yourself once. My Art is something that shows an illusion and interferes with the mind. It will change into a really terrifying Art if it's effects take hold. So much that a certain someone even calls it wily.』

The Seventh cleared his throat and then he lent me a hand. I took his hand and stood up, then the Seventh said to the Third.

『That's the most troublesome Art among all the ancestors' Arts after all. It was useful many times during my lifetime but, all that time I was thinking that perhaps the Third who manifested that Art was an utterly wily villain. And in fact it seems you're really a black-hearted person.』

The Third was laughing.

『How cruel. Well, but……if it's Lyle then you surely won't use it for anything strange, I thought it's fine even if I teach it to you. After all, it will be used for bad things if it's handed to anyone carelessly.』

I was feeling my heartbeat that was still beating fast while looking at the Third.

「You were making sure of my character until now?」

The Third honestly nodded.

『That's right. But, I have been thinking from some time ago that it might be alright to teach you the Art, and yet the timing never came. That's why I used this chance to teach you. You know, there is also that troublesome girl Shannon-chan. I'm thinking that this Art might become a trump card.』

Trump card? However, if the story of the Sixth and the others was right, the possibility that she would be able to break the Art itself was high. Was there another way to use this Art?

「Is there other way to use this?」

『Hm~, I don't know if it will work but, my Art is emitting really feeble mana to the surroundings. From that, it doesn't really do anything to magic or other Arts but, it will become a real hindrance for an Art that is related to the mind. Well, perhaps there is a possibility of it becoming a trump card. Use it when the time comes. Though it might not do anything.』

If possible I wished that it wouldn't become a situation where I had to use this trump card.

But, there was a problem with this Art.

「Err, how should I exhaust the enemy or disturb their mind?」

The Third folded his arms and laughed.

『That depends on how you do it. It's fine if you make your opponent physically tired, and you can surprise them or corner them mentally or the like?』

The Seventh looked at my face and demanded agreement.

『You understand don't you, Lyle? Just how horrible this Art is. If you use Mind on a weakened opponent, you can also extract information from them. It's extremely useful if you can use it well but, it's also a dangerous Art.』

Certainly, I could understand why the Third would ascertain my character first. Perhaps this Art by itself was in the weak category, but it was extremely powerful if it took effect.

In fact, the beating of my heart was still racing even now after seeing Celes's illusion. It was like the real Celes was there…….

While I was thinking that, the Third taught me one more method to display the effect of the Art.

『Also, there is an effective method to use it in case the opponent isn't weakened or disturbed mentally. That is, by conversation.』

「Conversation? Why is conversation effective?」

『Who knows? But, the more you talk the more the other side will fall deeper into the Mind's trick. There is no doubt about it because I had experimented many times in the past. You can trust me.』

……Just who did you experiment on!? I wanted to ask that but, it was a bit scary so I didn't.

Chapter 48 – Shannon Circry

—The day before Lyle and the others departed to the dungeon.

Shannon was entrusted to a hospital in Arumsaas by Miranda. The two sisters were alone inside a private room of the hospital.

As expected Shannon couldn't be left alone in the house that didn't even have a single servant and she would have to spend time for a while in the hospital. They also had no acquaintances in Arumsaas who could be entrusted with Shannon. Because she couldn't be entrusted to any random person, the choice was the hospital.

「Shannon, it will be a while but, I will surely return so don't worry and wait here. Also, if I don't return even after two weeks have passed, tell the hospital's staff and ask them to contact the Circry House.」

Miranda who was placing luggage inside the room for Shannon's sake, spoke about what Shannon should do if she didn't return. Shannon was staring at Miranda and asked her with a low voice.

「Onee-sama, do you remember your promise?」

Miranda's body instantly twitched as though electricity ran through her, then she turned towards Shannon. There was no light in her eyes, and then her face was expressionless. Miranda slowly answered Shannon's question.

「Inside the dungeon, Lyle and the others will……but」

She had succeeded until the Miranda of now acted mostly as she wished, but she felt that Miranda was still resisting. Shannon made a dissatisfied face.

(Will it be better to adjust her a bit stronger? That's right, then rather—)

「You have prepared until now for that right? Then you have to do it properly.」

Shannon manipulated the magic power drifting around Miranda and exerted influence on her emotions. The human emotions of joy, anger, pathos, humor—Shannon particularly influenced Miranda's anger and pathos.

Miranda's expression suddenly changed into sadness and she fell on her knees and covered her face with both her hands.

「……Hate. I hate that man. I hate Lyle. I hate that guy who betrayed my feelinggg!」

Her hatred was swelling.

Shannon also felt pained seeing the sight of Miranda crying and raging, but she was also having fun because it was her payback to Miranda who betrayed her before. It was a complicated feeling that was a mix of love and hatred.

「Ahaha, really Onee-sama, you finally became honest. That's right. You hate Lyle don't you? Then……do it.」

Shannon stood in front of Miranda and looked down on her while laughing.

「I'll experiment using Lyle and his group. If it succeeds, next will be the Circry House……Otou-sama and also Doris-neesama. Then at the end it will be that Celes too……. You will help me won't you, Onee-sama?」

When Shannon peered into Miranda's face, she had stopped crying before she noticed. She was smiling faintly and nodded in agreement at Shannon's question.

Shannon made the ugliest smile she ever made inside the hospital room—

.

The hospital where Shannon was entrusted.

I narrowed my eyes on the rooftop of a building that was quite far away from there while looking at her room.

It was barely. The distance was really barely enough. I was detecting the movement of the two within the range of the Second's Art while also using the Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth to observe the two.

The result was in the category of the worst within my imagination.

「……Guilty huh.」

Strong wind was blowing at the rooftop where there was no one else. The heat of the sun pierced my skin, but I forgot such stimulation from the result before me.

The Fifth muttered in frustration.

『Stupid girl.』

I heard that the Fifth was apathetic towards his own children and acted affectionate to animals instead. However, was that really the case?

He was taking interest in Milleia-san's two great-grandchildren that couldn't be considered as normal.

The Sixth was also speaking in disappointment.

『So she didn't inherit Milleia's heart. To think that she is trying to make her own biological sister into a puppet……what now? There is also the option to beat her personality into shape though?』

The Fifth thought for a while, and then he spoke with a cold tone.

『No, she is still unable to use her ability well seeing that she isn't detecting us over here. From our investigation, it seems she is also being treated really coldly. I don't think that she will be able to give up her revenge that easily. We're doing it. Destroying those eyes will be for the sake of that girl and her surroundings.』

I crouched on that place and looked down.

「……Honestly, this is heavy. If possible I don't want to do it.」

The Second also said something similar.

『As expected being told to take away the sight of a girl that age is……besides, surprisingly she might be a good kid you know?』

The atmosphere inside the Jewel was also heavy. Even I didn't want to do something like destroying a person's eyes by choice.

The Fourth summarized the opinion of the hesitating us.

『Either way, it's impossible to do it right now. She is also in a hospital. You will become unable to enter the dungeon if you cause a commotion at this stage.』

The Third sighed.

『You will need to be careful toward Miranda-chan too inside the dungeon. Even so, does Lyle really have to hurt a pitiful and sad girl who is treated coldly by her family even more than this with his own hands?』

I recalled the information about Shannon-chan that I heard from Aria-san and Sophia-san.

She was in a similar situation as me.

She was shunned by her family and lived in a terribly confined world until now.

If there was something that was dissimilar with me, it would be her kind big sister. I also didn't want a little sister, so I wanted a kind big sister like Miranda-san.

……I thought.

Wasn't there any good way that could solve this problem somehow without crushing her eyes?

If I couldn't find a way to rehabilitate Shannon-chan before we returned, I would have to crush her eyes just like the ancestors told me. I didn't want to do that.

.

—Arumsaas's underground dungeon.

An adventurer holding a lantern with one hand frowned and covered his mouth with his other hand.

「What the hell is this?」

Over there the figures of monsters in atrocious states just from looking at them were lying around. There was also the figure of a monster with a face of despair among them. The monsters that were hacked into pieces didn't have their material or magic stones collected. It was like the monsters were tormented for fun.

One veteran adventurer kneeled and looked at the wounds of the monsters.

「Even though there are many parts that are torn off, what's with this clean cut? It doesn't seem to be magic.」

The adventurer holding the lantern looked around with a disturbed face.

「This happened a lot recently. Is it that? There is a rumor that some spoiled noble brats are doing something like this to clear up their stress……they aren't going to change their targets to humans at this rate right?」

The veteran adventurer put his hand on his chin and groaned.

「That's certainly possible but, I haven't heard of any student in the Academy who can go this far. Could it be something else is—」

「Oi, stop it! Hey, let's go back already.」

The adventurer with the lantern was really scared. Seeing that the veteran adventurer collected the materials that looked like they could still be sold and then they left from that place.

The place that they had just left. A creature squirming at the ceiling was eight legged. It slowly used string to descend from the ceiling and showed its ominous figure.

A mouth that was distorted like a crescent moon.

Something like a human's upper body was growing from a torso that looked like a spider. The ominous existence was grinning while running on the dungeon's wall with its eight legs.

It found a monster and attacked. It was wielding an overwhelming violence while laughing.

Something was inside the underground dungeon of Arumsaas—

.

The day of departure. In the early morning when it was still dark.

We submitted the paperwork at the guild and waited for Professor Damian and Miranda-san near the building's entrance. Originally I thought that it would be good to wait at the dungeon's entrance, but Miranda-san said that this place was more convenient so we followed her advice.

The supplies we received from the shops and our baggage were placed on a cart we rented. Sophia-san would be the one pulling the cart. The reason the task was given to her was because her Art was an ability to change an object's weight.

The cart that looked heavy could be pulled really easily. Clara-san had already arrived ahead of us when we arrived. She was reading a book in front of the guild even now. Because the gate still hadn't been opened, the ground that was damp with morning dew also didn't give off any flying dust.

A lot of adventurers who were coming and going from the guild since early morning were looking at us. But, they immediately went back to their own work. Aria-san was looking sleepy while yawning with her mouth opened wide. She also stretched her back with her hands lifted up.

「Haa~, I wanted to sleep a bit longer.」

Sophia-san spoke criticizingly towards such Aria-san.

「Were you staying awake last night even after I warned you?」

Aria-san made a troubled face.

「No, you know, the show at the theatre we went to was interesting wasn't it? That was why I was excited.」

It seemed they had opened their hearts to Miranda-san and she showed them to places for having fun in Arumsaas.

「Certainly it was interesting, I recognize that but……」

It seemed Sophia-san also watched the show together with Aria-san. She agreed that it was interesting.

Novem looked at the two of them who were like that and let out a small sigh.

「They are too relaxed. It will be great if they don't get injured. But, I wish that they will focus before entering the dungeon.」

The Second also had the same opinion as Novem. Since the beginning the Second held a strict assessment towards the two, but it seemed this time it was more than that.

『They are lacking tension. Even though just a little while ago there was still some seriousness that could be felt from them. But it doesn't seem like they are getting carried away after earning a lot of money just some time ago. It's concerning but, perhaps this is a good chance for these two idiots to meet a slightly painful experience……』

We were able to earn a lot of money from the dungeon subjugation in Dalien. We fought the boss at the deepest room and succeeded in defeating it as well as obtaining the treasure.

Perhaps their confidence grew into conceit after the great success. But, something else seemed to weigh on the mind of the Second very much. He was thinking that there was something else to this.

Inside the Jewel, it seemed the ancestors were also having a lot of thought in their minds. This time they weren't talking much.

The matter of the dungeon.

The matter of Shannon-chan and Miranda-san.

The matter of Aria-san and Sophia-san.

My mind was also weighed down regarding Shannon-chan.

Novem turned her gaze from the two who were conversing to another direction. Clara-san also closed the book she read, put her book into her rucksack, and stood up with it on her back. She was looking in the same direction as Novem.

「It seems they have come. Even so, Professor Damian's puppets are conspicuous.」

The sound of scraping metal. The sound of stepping on the ground. When I looked at the direction those sounds came from, the adventurers in the surroundings were also making a ruckus. There were four large knights in full armor with height of more than two meters. The knights were carrying luggage on their backs and also things like weapons while walking to this way.

There was a cushion placed on the shoulder of one of them. The man who was sitting on it—Professor Damian noticed us and waved a staff that was taller than himself.

The full armored knights seemed to be puppets.

The Fifth was showing interest before I noticed.

『Lyle, can you check the inside with an Art?』

Hearing that I checked the inside with the Second's Art—Field, and certainly there wasn't any human wearing the armor inside. The inside was stuffed with metal parts.

But, the movement of the full armored puppets were really close to humans.

They were walking easily while carrying heavy luggage and weapons.

The Fourth muttered.

『I want that thing.』

There was also Miranda-san near the puppets of Professor Damian. She seemed energetic seeing how she was waving her hand at us this in the early morning. She was also wearing an outfit that looked easy to move in compared to usual.

I thought she was a noble young lady, but that appearance was unexpectedly suitable for her.

Novem also seemed to be in agreement. She was admiring Miranda-san's equipment.

「There are short swords and knives hanging on her waist. Does that mean she isn't only using magic?」

It was curious how she would fight, but right now there was a more important thing. I had to tell something to Professor Damian and everyone.

Professor Damian looked down at us from the puppet's shoulder and yawned while speaking.

「Now then, let's enter into the dungeon quickly. Or rather, why did we have to expressly come here to pick up you guys?」

Professor Damian also didn't know the circumstance behind it. Miranda-san made a troubled face seeing that Professor Damian didn't understand.

「It's because they will be in trouble without us, professor. Even so, it looks like everyone's luggage is a lot. Will it be alright?」

Miranda-san was concerned seeing that our luggage was more than she anticipated.

I spoke to the anxious Miranda-san.

「For now, let's walk until a place inside a dungeon where there's no one else. We will talk there.」

.

The dungeon located at the center of Arumsaas.

Speaking about the beginning, a really rare dungeon was discovered in a wasteland where there was nothing. Because of that people settled down there and developed the area into a city. We were walking from the outer wall towards the center of the city. The citizens of Arumsaas were avoiding us because they got scared seeing us carrying a lot of luggage and weapons.

The sky was getting bright and the number of people outside was also increasing. Clara-san explained to us.

「Normally adventurers will head to the dungeon when it's still darker. They avoid the time when a lot of people are out. Although, the Academy students are unconcerned about such things.」

Miranda-san also laughed slightly.

「As expected there is no way they will be up and about when it's still dark. Ah, look it comes.」

While we were making such talk, an armed duo approached us. They told us to stop, so everyone stopped walking. Then the two were looking at us with suspicion.

The duo seemed to be Arumsaas's soldiers.

「You guys, are you going to go to the dungeon? Despite that I've never seen you guys before. You guys are carrying permissions aren't you? We will check it out with the Academy so wait here.」

Aria-san got irritated with the soldier's attitude and talked back.

「From now? We have the permission here so just let us pass.」

The duo looked at each other's face. Then they grinned and held out their hand.

「If you want us to do that then give us what you owe. You might have to wait until afternoon for the Academy's confirmation you know? Do you want to wait until then? You've got to be smarter yeah, missy.」

Miranda-san sighed and showed her own permission. When the two soldiers saw the permission, their complexion quickly turned worse.

「A, a person from a Count house! Pa, pardon us! Ple, please pass through.」

But Miranda-san pointed at Professor Damian who was sitting above a puppet's shoulder after she received her permission back.

「I don't have any intention to say anything about what you two are doing but, do it after checking who it is you are facing more carefully. Also, this matter is—」

Professor Damian was irritated. He was looking at the two soldiers while frowning. He interrupted Miranda-san's words.

「What's with you two? What do you want by taking away my precious time? Hey, could it be I had to go as far until the guild for something like this?」

Miranda-san shrugged at the displeased Professor Damian and nodded.

「That's right, Professor Damian. After all I was worried that perhaps there would even be soldiers who cause problems even with my permission.」

The two soldiers not only went pale hearing the name Professor Damian, they were also starting to shake.

「Our apologies! We never thought that this is a group of a professor—ho, however, this too is our duty」

Professor Damian coldly spoke to the two soldiers who were trying to make excuses.

「I don't care. You two better prepare yourselves after hindering me like this. Or rather, I cannot remember your face or your name, so for the time being I'll tell the headmaster to make all the soldiers take responsibility. Good grief, even though there are already various troublesome matters like the guild and other things, for even the soldiers to also become a nuisance—」

Professor Damian kept complaining in a low voice like that. The soldiers were looking like they were going to cry. They were showing a pleading attitude to Miranda-san as if perhaps she could do something.

However, Miranda-san shook her head and walked away.

「Now, let's go. I wonder how many times we will be stopped like this.」

It didn't sound like she was joking.

Clara-san also spoke in agreement with Miranda-san.

「Normally it will be two or three times. However, it's surprising that there would be soldiers who stop us even after seeing Professor Damian's puppets. As expected I don't think there will be anymore reckless people like that.」

Miranda-san was laughing.

「Their quality is low even if you call them soldiers. Their training is also the minimum. Their salary is also cheap and their morale low. Well, I wish they will have more self-awareness after this though.」

Sophia-san who was pulling the cart looked at the two soldiers who left like they were running away in exasperation.

「Is this alright for Arumsaas itself? I think that adventurers challenging dungeons are important existences though?」

Adventurers were an important fighting power for Arumsaas that was in possession of a dungeon. I was thinking that but Clara-san shook her head.

「The Academy possesses a battle group of their own for managing the dungeon. The adventurers in the end are just spares. There won't be any big effect whether they are here or not. The soldiers also know that, that's why they seek bribes like this from the adventurers. Well, it can be resolved with several silver coins, so the majority of adventurers would pay.」

Aria-san's shoulders dropped hearing that.

「Somehow, it's far different from the Arumsaas in my imagination. I thought this is a more honest place.」

Certainly. In contrast with the name of Academy City, the actual conditions were horrible.

After that we used Professor Damian to threaten the soldiers who came to stop us and arrived at the entrance of the dungeon. The entrance was surrounded by walls with the figures of soldiers around it. In addition, the adventurers who would enter were forming a line, waiting for their turn to come. Novem was a bit surprised seeing the number.

「There are a lot of people here. I didn't think that there would be this many adventurers.」

Clara-san calculated the waiting time and sat down on the spot to start reading a book. She answered Novem while doing that.

「I heard that there will always be thirty parties inside the dungeon. When it's busy I think there will be fifty or sixty?」

Aria-san looked at the adventurers around us and looked convinced.

「Certainly there might be that many inside if there are this many outside. I wonder how many parties there are just in this place?」

Clara-san raised her face and then looked at Aria-san's face.

「Wha, what?」

「No, as I thought we have different impressions. Our party is in the category of extremely small. It looks like there are a lot of people here but, the number of the parties here at most is only five.」

「Lies-!」

I looked around in surprise. No matter how I looked, the number of adventurers here was more than a hundred but……. Clara-san returned her gaze to her book.

「Well, most of them are support to carry the luggage. Those in charge of battles is around ten-odd people with around the same or

a bit less number of support accompanying them. That's Arumsaas.」

I looked at Clara-san. Was this person who was said to be an excellent supporter in this Arumsaas, which had this many supporters, actually someone great?

Our turn arrived while I was thinking and we finally could enter into the dungeon.

Chapter 49 – Arumsaas's Underground Dungeon

There were several reasons why Arumsaas's underground dungeon was maintained under the city's management.

The amount of magic stones and materials that were obtained from it were abundant.

A lot of the contents of the treasure boxes that were produced by the dungeon had utility value.

The internal structure was easy for humans to traverse.

And then above all else, the dungeon itself that wasn't similar with any other dungeon gave it rarity value. This rarity was also a factor why scholars gathered to this place and created a city.

The first thing in my mind when I stepped inside that dungeon was—discomfort.

「What's, this—」

Aria-san was dumbfounded. I was also the same. Sophia-san was also looking around in surprise. Novem was……looking like she wanted to say something, but she stayed silent.

Clara-san was familiar with the place and wasn't surprised.

Miranda-san who lived in Arumsaas and had entered this dungeon several times before was similar.

Professor Damian didn't show any particular reaction.

Miranda-san looked at us and said that at first she was also like us and started explaining.

「This is Arumsaas's underground dungeon. You couldn't imagine this right? I was also the same.」

Professor Damian seemed to have interest in this and started speaking talkatively.

「This dungeon is different with nature-based dungeons that often appear, it's modeled after a man-made object. Dungeons like that will rarely appear sometimes but, what is amazing from this one is that it's not from our era……it's modeled after an ancient civilization that had perished I guess? This place was investigated and Arumsaas found out that this place is modeled after a building of the ancient people. What is amazing is that the technology of the ancient people was far more advanced than us. There are a lot of interesting discoveries from here.」

Arumsaas investigated and collected the technology of the ancient people like that and greatly developed using that knowledge and technology.

I looked below my feet.

The surface of the grey floor was rough, but it was flat. There wasn't any spot that was bumpy or extremely caving in.

The walls were also the same. When I touched it with my hand, it had a smooth texture. Pillars were placed at regular intervals. The ceiling was high. On the whole the corridors were also built widely.

What was curious was the entrance into a room that was slightly ahead of us. Something like a lantern that was radiating light was attached above the entrance.

The material didn't seem like glass. It was a rectangular box with white and green decoration applied on its surface that was shining.

The pattern looked like a person entering a door……it looked like such a picture.

There were also other light sources. The long and narrow tube that was hanged from the ceiling was shining white, illuminating some parts of the corridor. It was unfortunate that it wasn't illuminating the whole place.

I touched the wall and floor with my hand. I had never touched a texture like this before.

「This isn't stone isn't it?」

It's also different from a corridor that was made from scraping out stone. I didn't know how to describe it but, it was a really mysterious dungeon.

Clara-san touched her artificial left arm with her right hand. I heard the arm part make a brisk sound *kashun* and saw three metal sticks were inserted there.

What was that…….that was cool.

When I peered with interest, the Third was also similarly showing interest.

『That artificial arm, isn't it amazing for some reason? It's moving normally and it also feels like there is a secret behind it.』

The Second was also showing interest at the arm. But, it was a different kind of interest from the Third.

『If there was something like this in my time. The guys who had it hard after losing their limbs would be helped.』

Clara-san took some distance from me. That was a bit sad.

「Ple, please don't look so much. Err……it's troubling.」

The opened part was closed. Then Clara-san turned the artificial arm's palm face up and used magic.

「……Light.」

Multiple light spheres were let out from Clara-san's palm and they floated. They moved to above the party and illuminated the surrounding brightly.

Sophia-san lifted her face and saw them in open-mouthed state.

「Amazing.」

I agree. Even if I made light with magic it wouldn't be this bright, besides I wouldn't be able to make the light to skillfully illuminate the whole place.

Clara-san looked slightly embarrassed while talking about her artificial arm.

「Three Arts were built into my artificial arm. The Arts were carved on sticks of rare metal that were set so I can use them. The first Art is light source. The second is fire. The third is water. If it's water that won't be used for drinking water then I'll be able to prepare any water from hot to cold.」

I honestly thought.

「I also want that kind of arm.」

Clara-san pushed up her glasses with her finger, and then she raised a sound argument after she fixed her glasses' position.

「Please be glad with your flesh arm. Nothing beats that.」

I couldn't argue against that.

Then Professor Damian looked at Clara-san and yelled from remembering something.

「Could it be that artificial hand—was my creation?」

Why was his tone questioning? Clara-san bowed her head to Professor Damian.

「Thank you very much for that time. Thanks to that I obtained a new left hand. But, you didn't remember it at all until now?」

「Yeah. Just when I thought that hand looks cool somehow, the blueprint surfaced in my mind and the memory when I created it came back.」

Professor Damian seemed to feel refreshed from recalling that. He was looking happy. Well, that was all though. Miranda-san sighed.

「Come on, more adventurers will come from behind if we don't move immediately. Also, doesn't Lyle-kun have something to tell us?」

That's right. I immediately used the Jewel's Arts to check the surrounding map and enemy's positions and the adventurers' movements.

Like that I confirmed the shortest route to advance to the next floor.

「We are moving. This way. Anyway we will advance while avoiding battle right now.」

After I decided the destination, everyone started moving based on that.

The light source that was emitting light above the party followed us when we were moving and illuminated the area from above. It was

really convenient. Even though the light source that I could produce with magic would only emit light at that spot without moving…….

.

We advanced while avoiding contact with monsters and adventurers working inside the dungeon, and then we arrived at floor B3.

Sophia-san went down the slope in relieve.

「I'm glad that it's a gentle slope. If it was a stair then I would have to lift up the cart.」

Clara-san talked about the structure of the dungeon.

「There is no stair in this dungeon. All the paths are a gentle slope like this. It's also wide and not narrow, but the problem isn't the shape but the long distance.」

She said that it would be extremely troublesome when we wanted to carry up heavy baggage.

Aria-san understood.

「Thinking again, our baggage will be a lot more when we climb back up compared to when we go down. We will have to carry things like magic stones and materials. I see, that's what a supporter is for.」

Manpower to carry the baggage was absolutely needed.

I searched for the nearest room after arriving at floor B3. There was no monsters or adventurers at the room.

Miranda-san looked impressed when I entered inside without being on guard at all.

「Amazing. Even though we were taught to be careful when normally entering the room, normally it's impossible to enter carelessly like that.」

That must be an unbelievable act from the perspective of other adventurers. When Clara-san saw that everyone had entered inside, she dispelled the light source that was almost dying out and launched a new light source.

Within the illumination from above, I made a suggestion to everyone regarding the management of the baggage.

「I learned a new Art. Actually now I can store the majority of our baggage.」

Novem looked at me and her eyes opened wide for a moment, but she immediately returned to normal.

「As expected from Lyle-sama. It's Brod-sama's Art isn't it?」

The topic was unrelated with the other people here so I cut the talk short.

The Seventh seemed to be slightly lonely inside the Jewel.

『Lyle, I think it's fine even if you boast about your grandfather here. Ojii-chan is really amazing just so you know.』

It would be meaningless even if I explained so I wouldn't.

「However, I won't be able to use it for a while after using it once. Please remember that the deposit and withdraw of the baggage will only be possible once a day. I plan to use it again tomorrow night.」

Clara-san seemed like she wanted to say something to me after I said that, but Professor Damian was faster than her.

「……I was right when I said before that you're the expert. No, it's not like you are a dungeon specialist so perhaps it's wrong? Anyway, it was the right choice to rely on you.」

After everyone decided which items would be left behind for two days supply and which items would be stored, I snapped my finger. Novem tilted her head seeing that gesture.

A magic circle formed on the ground around me, then I instructed everyone to move the items into it.

Sophia-san stepped inside the magic circle hesitantly and left the baggage along with the cart on it. Then she immediately evacuated from the magic circle. It was cute. Aria-san was laughing at Sophia-san who was like that.

「Why are you scared huh?」

「I, I'm not scared!」

After everyone left the baggage that wasn't needed at present, I snapped my fingers once more. The baggage sunk as though they were getting absorbed by the magic circle. And then when they were gone, the magic circle also vanished.

While everyone was staring in amazement, my legs staggered and I almost fell.

「So I'm still not—used to it?」

But, there was one person who supported my body. I thought it would be Novem like usual, but unexpectedly it was Miranda-san.

「Are you okay? Somehow your face is looking completely exhausted.」

A sensation that was different from usual. And then her scent. I felt slightly embarrassed.

「We, well, this is the Art's weakness. I won't be able to move without resting for a while.」

Novem made a troubled face near me. When I smiled at her telling her not to worry, she nodded and began to prepare for a break.

「Aria-san and Sophia-san, can I ask you two to be on the lookout?」

「Okay.」

「Leave it to me.」

I was supported by Miranda-san while walking towards the wall. There I leaned on the wall and sat down. Professor Damian made the puppets sit and he was also taking a rest. Clara-san put her lightened rucksack on her back and rested her body. Miranda-san was talking to me.

「Lyle-kun is really amazing. But it seems even Aria and the others didn't know about that Art though?」

I laughed and thought to dodge the question, but Miranda-san's eyes looked quite serious so I told her the circumstance.

「Just as you can see, I have to rest after using it once. Until now I couldn't use it even if I wanted to.」

It wasn't a lie. Then, Miranda-san nodded several times and continued her question curiously.

「Then, do you still have other Arts that the people around you don't know about?」

Novem came this way when she asked that with her gaze turned towards the Jewel.

「Miranda-san, more than that will be a breach of manners.」

Asking about other people's Arts was a breach of manners. Miranda-san shrugged hearing that and apologized to Novem and me.

「I'm sorry. I tried asking because I was curious. Lyle-kun too, sorry.」

She said that and headed towards Aria-san and the others with a smile. I saw her off and then looked at Novem.

「I don't really mind it you know?」

Novem said that it was no good even then.

「Before talking about breach of manners, Lyle-sama should be more aware of yourself. That blue Gem is the Walt House's heirloom. The precious Arts that the ancestors manifested are preserved in it. Please don't teach the information about it to others that easily.」

It seemed that I was scolded by Novem.

When I apologized, Novem said 「Please be careful next time」 and sighed.

Suddenly her face changed from like a mother scolding her son to a serious expression.

「Also……when Lyle-sama used Brod-sama's Art, you snapped your fingers didn't you? That gesture itself is meaningless. That was Brod-sama's habit. Where did Lyle-sama see it?」

This was bad. I thought that for an instant, but I immediately recalled.

The Seventh—grandfather was lenient on his grandson. Then, it wouldn't be strange for him to show his Art to his grandson in order to boast. I didn't have the memory of before ten years old but, the possibility of me seeing it before should be high.

「I saw it once. Grandfather must have wished to boast to me at that time. What about it?」

Novem made a slightly troubled look while nodding, but she didn't seem to be convinced fully.

「I guess. Brod-sama doted on Lyle-sama after all……」

Novem muttered as though to convince herself and then she sat down beside me. She recommended the sweets she brought to me.

「Lyle-sama, sweet things are good when you're tired.」

Novem was loyally devoted like usual.

However, the Seventh muttered quizzically within the Jewel.

『……Did I once show Novem when I used my Art? I also don't have a memory of showing it to Lyle though.』

The Third made fun of the Seventh.

『Grandpas tend to boast to their grandchildren after all. Surely you had shown it before. You know, it seems our memories become hazy after we hand over the Jewel after all. Though my memory until the end remains because I died in battle though.』

The Fourth sighed.

『Well, in the Third's case……. But, certainly the memory after that doesn't exist. Surely you had the chance to show it after you let go of the Jewel.』

The Seventh denied that opinion.

『That might be true in my heyday, but the abrupt use of mana in old age cannot be underestimated. Doing something like forcing myself just to boast is……』

The Sixth recalled.

『Aa, it must be that. Novem might have heard it from her father or grandfather. They also accompanied you together in battle right? They should have seen it at that time.』

The Seventh reluctantly accepted it. But, I also thought that possibility was the highest.

『Perhaps that's the case?』

However, the Fifth said to the Seventh.

『But, after seeing how doting you are to Lyle, I can easily imagine you showing off to him even if you have to force yourself.』

Certainly. I could easily picture the figure of the Seventh forcing himself in front of his grandson.

I laughed slightly. Novem peered into my face hearing that.

「Lyle-sama?」

「Ah, no……it's nothing.」

I smoothed over my expression and ate the sweets I received from Novem. The sweetness spread inside my mouth and it flowed into my stomach. After a while, it really felt like my feeling became slightly comforted.

.

We resumed moving after a moderately long rest.

I asked Clara-san to erase the light source and approached a group of monsters that was in the way of our path.

There was light at a crossroads. Over there were an orc that was clad in iron armor and three goblins around it.

A total of four monsters were lying in wait there for prey.

Fortunately, our location was dark so they couldn't see us from there.

The Second laughed seeing the monsters.

『Are they planning to lie in ambush at that kind of place? It's like they're saying please target us.』

I told everyone to not move yet and took out a bow. I took out a single arrow from the special quiver on my waist.

Professor Damian saw the magic arrow I took out and asked with a small voice.

「That's a failed work isn't it? The students often failed in their side jobs and sold it on the outside. Is that usable?」

I nodded and then gave instructions to Novem and Aria-san.

「It has a lot of issues though. Novem, prepare an area magic after I fire the arrow. Aria-san, please take care of the monsters that manage to slip this way.」

Novem nodded. Aria-san also responded by gripping her spear.

The Second advised me.

『Aim slowly. You can do it.』

I listened and calmed my heart. I could hear my heartbeat louder than the surrounding's sounds. And then, when my fingers let go, the arrow hit the head of the orc in the distance.

The head wasn't pierced. The arrowhead that collided burst and the metal helmet dented. Blood flew out from the helmet's gap. When the orc's large body collapsed as though it was strongly punched, the goblins raised their weapons and looked around.

Novem lifted her silver staff and prepared her magic. The goblins found the light that was generated by magic inside the darkness and rushed this way.

I put away the bow and pulled out the saber on my waist. Novem fired her magic at that timing.

「Fire Cannon」

A large ball of fire was strongly fired out and it passed through the square corridor. It hit one goblin and burst out into flames that scattered to the surroundings.

The goblins were enveloped in flames, and then the flames vanished when they stopped moving.

I confirmed the death of the monsters and immediately checked the situation around.

「……There is an enemy that is coming by crawling on the wall. Is it an insect type?」

Clara-san immediately launched a light source and gave me advice.

「Lyle-san, it's a troublesome enemy. Speaking of insects in this floor it will be a centipede……it has a size around an adult male and it can spit out poison. It's a troublesome monster.」

The monster noticed the battle just now and approached this way.

The number……was three.

「There are three. They're coming from the front. They are heading straight at us.」

Hearing that Professor Damian sent the three puppets to the front.

He slightly pushed his glasses up with his index finger, and then he said towards us.

「No, magnificent. I think I'll also show my true ability here. Ah, I'll leave it to you to take care of it if there is an enemy that slips through.」

The three puppets lined in a single horizontal row. Each of them was wielding a different weapon. It felt reliable looking at the backs of their figures wielding weapons while waiting for the monsters.

I confirmed the distance with the enemy and—

「They're here!」

I could see three centipedes crawling on the wall. The armed puppets wasted no time to move forward and swung down their weapons at the centipedes.

One puppet used a spear and stabbed a centipede's head and sewed the monster to the wall. Another one used the centipede's momentum and bisected it vertically with an axe.

A puppet with a mace crushed a centipede's torso. But, even after getting smashed the monster was heading this way.

When Aria-san and I were about to move, three knives shot through between us—and stabbed the centipede's head. The monster wriggled on that spot and after a while it stopped moving.

When we looked back, it was Miranda-san who threw the knives.

「……That was surprising.」

Miranda-san shrugged and then she explained to us.

「But, you now understand my strength from the throw just now right? I can also use magic but, I can also do quite much in this way.」

Aria-san praised Miranda-san even while feeling astonished.

「That's amazing. But, say something first when you are throwing next time.」

「I'm sorry. I'll do that next time.」

Clara-san wore gloves while I was checking the situation of the surroundings and approached the monsters. She confirmed their deaths and began to collect their magic stones and materials.

There was no sign of enemies approaching.

The other members also stayed alert towards the surroundings. Novem was mainly looking towards the front while Miranda-san was watching the rear.

Sophia-san and Aria-san were talking about the battle just now.

「Both Professor Damian and Miranda-san are really skilled.」

「You're right. I didn't have any turn.」

Looking at Professor Damian, he was making a puppet to pull out the spear that was stabbed into the wall. The wall was regenerating as though time was rewinding back.

Clara-san who finished the dismantling asked for confirmation from me regarding the magic stones and materials.

「There are seven magic stones. The materials are all these. Will we leave behind the iron equipment?」

She showed me the iron equipment that the orc and goblins had. They looked heavy.

The Fourth understood Clara-san's question.

『I see. It will be a hindrance to progress further while carrying around these things. Lyle, let's just bring the magic stones.』

I told Clara-san that just the magic stones were alright, and then I told everyone to begin moving again.

Clara-san talked to me while walking.

「As expected from Professor Damian. It seems that his nickname of Puppet User is the real deal. Miranda-san's movement is also not bad. I wonder from where she fostered that much skill.」

Miranda-san who was an Academy student was more skilled than expected. Even Clara-san was curious about it.

It wouldn't be bad to ask her about it later.

Before long we found the slope that continued to the floor B5.

.

Floor B5.

What first surprised us after going down was a device that existed in this underground dungeon.

「Oh, is this the first time for Lyle and everyone? This is the device to travel between floors in Arumsaas's underground dungeon.」

There was an iron door that was shaped like bellows. I could see wire behind it and it looked like it was moving.

Clara-san pointed at the top of such entrance.

「There is a gauge there. You can see the number right? That shows where the traveling device is located right now. You can use this device to freely travel if it's from floor B5 until floor B25.」

Aria-san was happy hearing that.

「What. In that case we can use this thing to go down until floor B25 easily right now.」

Clara-san shook her head.

「That device can only move until a floor that everyone has reached before. In other words, people who only entered this dungeon for the first time will have to advance forward by their own feet.」

Professor Damian was also making a fed up voice.

「That's troublesome. Well, if it's you guys then you will be able to advance further ahead quickly.」

Aria-san's shoulders dropped.

「It was stupid to hold expectations.」

Novem made a troubled face seeing Aria-san like that. Even so she consoled her.

「It means that it will be easier for us on the way back.」

Sophia-san was relieved hearing that. As expected, it was bothersome just imagining walking until floor B40 and then returning back again on feet while defeating monsters.

A normal party would have to travel while carrying even more supplies.

Clara-san was teaching us some snippets of knowledge. Unexpectedly she might like the act of teaching other people.

「In a large scale dungeon, this kind of device that helps with exploring the dungeon usually exists, though not all of them have the same mechanism. There is a theory that it's in order to lure even stronger adventurers deeper into the dungeon.」

I looked at the device. I didn't know who was using this but, the device was moving up from floor B20 right now.

Dungeon prepared convenient device in order to lure adventurers even deeper into it—it vaguely felt like it wanted to get subjugated.

The Sixth was impressed inside the Jewel.

『This is amazing. In our case we will subjugate the dungeon right away when it's discovered, so we don't have experience seeing something like this.』

The Walt House would be in high spirits when a dungeon was discovered and they would scramble to be the first to challenge the dungeon. Certainly, that was the correct action seeing that they didn't have the skill necessary to manage a dungeon, but I could imagine them immediately subjugating a dungeon even if they actually had such skill.

The Fourth was feeling cheerful while making an over-optimistic calculation.

『The dungeon is this big, I wonder how much treasure we will get if it's subjugated……I'm really curious. Just how much money it will become.』

The ancestors thoughts kept heading towards subjugation no matter what. However, the underground dungeon of Arumsaas was managed. It was forbidden to subjugate this dungeon.

Thinking that other places were also the same, almost all large scale dungeons were impossible to be subjugated due to human's intentions.

Which was deeper I wonder, the depths of a dungeon or the greed of humans?

Novem put her hand on my shoulder.

「Lyle-sama, let's depart.」

「Yeah, let's go.」

.

—Night.

Shannon slipped out from her personal room in the hospital and strolled. She noticed an approaching presence and hid behind a cover while checking the presence.

The person walking this way with a lamp in hand was a nurse who was doing a night round.

「Haa, it's spooky. Let's finish this quickly and get back.」

Shannon felt puzzled seeing the person walking while feeling scared of the darkness. It was because darkness was something ordinary for Shannon. It was an everyday thing for her.

Even when she was using her mystic eyes, she would basically only be able to see the shining mana inside the darkness.

And then she distinguished people by mana.

(That woman! This morning she stole my snack just because I cannot see it!)

Even though her eyes couldn't see, the sound and vibration taught Shannon of her surroundings. When she checked afterwards, her favorite snack was gone.

Shannon grinned and manipulated the fluctuation of the woman's mana to stimulate her fear. The woman immediately started to shake in fear.

「Wha, what? A strange sound is—」

She was even hearing auditory hallucinations from too much fear. She was feeling scared even to the sounds of swaying curtains from the wind.

Shannon was having fun watching that while controlling the surrounding mana further to make her own silhouette blurred.

Then she called out to the woman from behind.

「Hey, big sister……let's play.」

「Eh? ……No……NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!」

Then the face of the woman who turned around distorted in terror and she screamed at that place. After that she ran away in great panic. Her legs got entangled from feeling too scared and she fell. Even so her fear drove her to run away by crawling on the ground. Even Shannon who was surprised at first seeing that was laughing while holding her stomach right now.

「Ahahaha, that's what happens if you steal my snack. Even so, I wonder how do I look like in that woman's eyes?」

She only made it so that her figure was hazy. In addition she only stimulated the woman's fear a bit strongly.

Surely the people of this world couldn't see it. The satisfied Shannon returned to her room after that.

She turned her shining eyes to the ceiling of the dark corridor.

「Come to think of it……I wonder if Onee-sama is doing well. Come back quickly, Onee-sama.」

Shannon chuckled and vanished into the corridor's darkness—

.

Floor B14.

Inside a dark room.

Reptile demi-humans—lizardmen were making fire. Their height didn't reach three meters but, they were big enough.

If the axe in their hand was swung down, even an armored knight would be bisected into two.

They possessed hard skin and their physical strength couldn't be compared with a human. There were five of such tough lizardman warriors wearing iron equipment.

They were drinking alcohol that seemed to be stolen from adventurers.

There was one lizardman acting as lookout at the room's entrance. Unlike the orc and goblin we fought at the upper floor, I got the impression that this group was really clever.

Clara-san who heard the situation narrowed her sleepy looking eyes.

「It's troublesome. This is the group of lizardmen that is rampaging near floor B15. I heard that recently this group is destroying several adventurer parties. It seems their number has increased slightly from before.」

Strong adventurers would use the device to advance to even deeper floor. Because of that the adventurers who were finally able to reach the vicinity of floor B15 would find lizardmen as their first obstacle. It seemed this monster became a wall for adventurers who reached this far for the first time.

Professor Damian slightly raised his hand.

「Should I do it? If it's my puppets then they can be repaired right away even if they are damaged a bit.」

I pondered.

The Second seemed a bit disappointed inside the Jewel.

『What's this, it's just lizardmen.』

The Third was also the same.

『Come to think of it I've seen them several times. I think they weren't that strong.』

The Fourth was also of the same opinion.

『Human bandits are more troublesome. This monster is just a bit tougher and cannot be defeated with low level magic, that's all.』

The Fifth wasn't interested.

『They aren't cute so it doesn't matter.』

The Sixth sounded delighted.

『Is that so? They are interesting guys when you fight them from the front. Sometimes there will also be tough guys among them.』

The Seventh was sighing.

『They aren't any threat. You can block the entrance with puppets and then face them one by one, or you can also ask Novem to fire magic at them. You can just burn them all together with the room.』

Arumsaas' dungeon wouldn't burn. Because of that even if we used magic recklessly, the dungeon wouldn't be harmed and react excessively before rampaging.

It was a dungeon where we could fire magic without worry.

However, what to do now……while I was thinking that, I recalled that I still hadn't used my saber. It was a quality product I purchased in Centralle before coming to Arumsaas.

「……We will take care of this. Aria-san, Sophia-san, start preparing. Also, will Miranda-san participate too?」

Miranda-san answered 'Naturally' when I asked.

「You can make use of me more. I'm really strong even though I look like this after all.」

Aria-san nodded.

「I can go anytime.」

Sophia-san was also the same.

「I'm ready. Besides, I haven't really done anything today. I'll do my best here.」

I nodded, then I asked Novem and Professor Damian to guard Clara-san and watch the entrance.

Novem made a worried face towards me.

「Lyle-sama, is it really alright?」

「Yeah, I feel like we can do this.」

I muttered that and led the three towards the room with the enemies. I entrusted Aria-san to be the first attacker.

Aria-san nodded and her body shined faintly red. She rushed into the room with a speed that the eye couldn't follow and circled behind the guard lizardman. She stabbed at his heart with her spear.

The guard lizardman raised a loud voice. The remaining five lizardmen who were relaxing reached out to their weapons and immediately stood up.

「They're quick.」

The three of us entered inside the room. Then Sophia-san's hand took the battle axe on her back and cut off the neck of the lizardman whose heart was stabbed by the spear.

「Splendid!」

When the five lizardmen showed movement to surround us, Miranda-san threw her knives and crushed the eyes of one lizardman. When the monster's movement dulled, she leaped towards his neck and cut open the neck with the short sword she drew out from her waist.

The blood spurted out and the lizardman fell on his knees before collapsing.

「That's two. Now then, next is—」

I was holding a saber in each hand with the stance of a two-sword style. One monster approached me from the front while a second one went around behind me to swing his axe horizontally.

I jumped forward to deal with the pincer attack. The lizardman in front of me opened his eyes wide.

Behind me I felt the wind from the axe that was swung horizontally while I tightly gripped my saber. I passed through beside the lizardman in front of me while dodging the axe attack behind me. At the same time I bisected its torso with my saber. When I used the falling lizardman as my foothold to jump, the lizardman behind me opened his eyes wide in surprise.

「Is it okay that you are only looking at me?」

Then a battle axe came flying while rotating towards the lizardman that was looking up at me. It pierced deeply into his stomach.

Then I swung down my saber from above towards another lizardman that wasn't looking my way and landed. The lizardman's head fell.

Only one remained. The last one looked my way and opened his mouth largely as intimidation while taking a step forward. It was then a knife and a hand axe flew and stabbed him.

At the end, Aria-san jumped up and stabbed the lizardman's head with her spear and the battle was over.

I confirmed that the six lizardmen were dead, then I called Novem and the others who were guarding the entrance.

The Third was giving applause from inside the Jewel.

『Lyle, you're really amazing. There are some places where your inexperience showed, but you will grow even more from now on if you amass experience. You are really reliable only in battle.』

I could feel the Third's mean mischief from the part of only in battle.

The Fifth gave me some advice after seeing the way I fought.

『You are still putting too much strength when you swing your saber. The cut was clean only because your weapon is a good one.』

No one would honestly praise me even though the battle was over. After I wiped off the blood on the saber and put it back into its sheath, Miranda-san walked toward me.

「Lyle-kun, that was really amazing. It was like watching the fight of an expert.」

I was embarrassed.

「I, is that so」

「Yep, it was amazing. You're really……amazing. You're strong and can be relied on. Besides you are looking at the people around you without caring whether they're noble or not……」

Miranda-san's atmosphere became a bit dark. I became worried and called to her.

「Miranda-san?」

「……Hey, Lyle-kun. I like Lyle-kun……will it be a bother if I tell you that?」

「Eh?」

Miranda-san forced herself to smile seeing my bewildered face. And then, she apologized to me and headed towards the lizardmen.

「Sorry, just forget it. It will be hard for Clara-san to take care of them alone, so I'll help out with collecting the magic stones.」

I couldn't give any answer. My heart felt painful.

If only I didn't do something like a faked hitting on a woman and had a proper encounter with her at the beginning…….

The Sixth persuaded me with a strong tone when I was feeling regretful.

『Lyle, this is the result of your actions. You cannot erase it so that it never happened. If you feel that it's painful then be careful from now on. Also, think of that pain as your punishment.』

I thought that nobody was asking, but I nodded slightly.

「……Yes」

Chapter 50 – Floor Boss

Arumsaas's underground dungeon possessed several characteristics.

One of those characteristics was the existence of a floor boss on every tenth floor. Even if the troublesome floor bosses were defeated, they would revive after a certain period.

However, depending on the way you look at it, it was actually a convenient system.

If it were adventurers who had won against the boss once, it would be possible for them to prepare equipment and tactics that were suited towards the boss to defeat it even more effectively. Furthermore, the magic stone that a boss had was actually expensive. The size and purity were better than other magic stones.

What I wanted to say here was about periodically defeating the bosses on floors B10 and B20 that had the floor traveling device.

—Floor B21.

We defeated the monsters in the area and started preparing to camp for the night in a room that had its safety already secured.

I was setting up something together with Clara-san.

「A curtain?」

「Yes. Do this……with this the surroundings won't be able to see what is behind this.」

If we were asked what we were making at the room's corner, it was a toilet. We made a partition using a curtain and only put a collapsible bucket inside. On top of that we put a fold up chair that had an open hole on the seat.

Something was thrown into the bucket at the end.

「That is?」

「It's deodorant. With this, it will become really comfortable.」

Just because we were inside a dungeon, there was no way a human could hold back their physiological needs……there was the necessity to rack our brains for various things like this.

I once heard that male adventurers became unable to perceive female adventurers as members of the opposite sex because the sense of shame of both sides thinned and the female adventurers becoming masculine in attitude.

……From the bottom of my heart I didn't want Novem and the others to become like that.

Clara-san saw me feeling down and tilted her head.

「It's just a simple thing, but it's better than nothing.」

「No, I understand that but still」

When I said that, the Fifth thrust a fact before me apathetically.

『It's also the same on the battlefield. Something like feces is common, and humans, if their stomach is split open—』

No, I understood so please don't explain it to me intentionally like that.

Clara-san came out from the curtain and moved to carry out other preparations. I followed her too.

「Please wash your hands cleanly. Also please call me in case you need hot water. I will prepare the water anytime.」

I was honestly impressed seeing Clara-san moving around to do many things.

「Looks like you have a lot of work to do.」

Clara-san looked at me and sighed.

「……Well, originally it will be better if there were more supporters that came along.」

When I made a troubled face, she said 「I understand the reason for this though」 to me.

Even if I was told to hire more people, firstly I didn't know whether they could be trusted or not. Besides, I was using my Arts in full capability. I wanted to avoid having this information grasped by some random people.

In regards to that, Clara-san was said to be an excellent supporter. In other words, those kinds of things—leaking information to other people, stealing magic stones or other items, playing hooky with work, those kinds of minus aspects were something she had never done until now.

It was really ironic that she caught the eye of the guild because she obtained high evaluations and ended up being introduced to Academy students who were nobles with bad characters.

「This time there was no time to do so. So I understand that you didn't have time to gather more people. But, it's better to think about it more from next time.」

We were working with the camp's preparations even while she was explaining about various things like this.

.

The sound of a sleeper’s breathing could be heard.

When I opened my eyes, there was only Miranda-san who was awake. Originally there should be one more person who was awake, but Sophia-san was sleeping in a sitting posture.

「……It's unusual that Sophia-san is like this.」

The diligent Sophia-san had never dozed off until now. Furthermore she had also rested before in preparation of the guard duty today. She should be taking the guard duty after resting properly.

While I was hesitating whether to wake her up or not, Miranda-san smiled and said.

「Let's allow her to sleep. It looks like she is tired.」

I scratched my head and looked at Sophia-san's sleeping face. Her sleeping figure in a sitting position looked somewhat cute.

「I guess.」

The Second also acted unusually inside the Jewel.

『It's not Aria but Sophia who is nodding off? How unusual. Even though this girl's redeeming feature is her diligence.』

Inside the dark room, Miranda-san was checking her tools in front of a lantern's light. She looked like an experienced adventurer like that.

She carefully checked her tools and sometimes she would do maintenance.

When I checked the time, it felt like it would be better to stay awake like this rather than going back to sleep. I woke up and stretched. Nearby Novem, Aria-san, Clara-san, and Professor Damian were sleeping.

It was dangerous inside the dungeon for almost everyone to sleep. Because of that I checked the surrounding area, but there wasn't any particular danger approaching.

Floor B21.

There were two adventurer parties other than us here. None of them were moving. They seemed to be resting. When I sat down near Miranda-san, she prepared soup for breakfast. But, it wasn't the leftovers from yesterday. She was making a new one from scratch.

「You are making a new one? What about yesterday's leftovers?」

Miranda-san shrugged.

「Everyone ate more than expected. Well, we also had some surplus with the supply so it's alright. Want to eat first?」

Miranda-san poured the soup into a bowl and handed it to me, then she also gave me some bread. The soup's taste was different from Novem's, but it was delicious.

「It's delicious.」

「I see. I'm glad.」

And then time passed like that without any words. It felt really uncomfortable. The ancestors were talking inside the Jewel but it was about an unrelated topic.

『How about doodling on Sophia-chan's face? I think that can be her punishment.』

『How can you suggest to do that with a girl's face? If you do something like that……uh! Stomach, my stomach hurts!』

The Fourth recalled something from the Third's suggestion and his stomach hurt. I learned a fact that even the ancestors who were nothing but memories could also get a stomachache. Just what happened in the Fourth's past?

……I didn't care I guess.

As expected it was too quiet, so I talked to Miranda-san.

「Come to think of it, what is Miranda-san studying at the Academy?」

Miranda-san politely answered my vague question.

「Let's see……there are various things but, I think it's mainly pharmacy. I focused on magic for a time because I wanted to heal Shannon's eyes, but the result was no good. So I thought of trying it with medicine and started studying that. In the end it also looked to be hopeless though. After all, that girl, she actually couldn't see since she was born. Various famous doctors said that it's better to give up.」

The Sixth was getting tearful.

『So Miranda inherited Milleia's kindness. And yet, why is Shannon like that』

The Fifth talked with a disgusted voice.

『A large man shouldn't cry, it's unsightly. However, she is a kind girl that is rare in this age. Someone like her was also rare in my era though.』

What the Fifth meant by rare must be in regards of among the nobles.

I looked at Professor Damian.

「Then, is Professor Damian a pharmacy specialist?」

I thought that because he was acquainted with Miranda-san, but it seemed I was wrong. Miranda-san smiled slightly while shaking her head.

「You're wrong. I attend Professor Damian's class, but I also attend various other classes. I have been clever since the past. I can do anything skillfully to a certain extent. But, I'm what they called a jack of all trades and a master of none.」

I denied those words of Miranda-san.

「That's not true. Your movement today is far from being average—」

Miranda-san stared at the lantern's light.

「In the end, those with strong individuality will be stronger. I don't have speed like Aria or power like Sophia-san. I'm not as skilled as Novem-san in magic, and I also don't have an Art that stands out. I also don't have the capability to handle multiple Arts as well as Lyle-kun.」

I rubbed my nose shyly, but then booing came from the Jewel. It was the Third.

『Even though you were doubting us when we praised you, you will believe it when it's a beautiful girl who said it? Lyle, you haven't forgotten that you have Novem-chan and the others have you? You're flirting too much just because everyone is sleeping.』

……This guy is noisy.

Miranda-san stood up.

「It will be time soon. Let's wake up Sophia-san.」

Saying that, she went to wake up the sleeping Sophia-san.

「Eh? I, I!」

Sophia-san sprang up when she was called at and apologized to Miranda-san with a red face. She was already tearful even.

Well, it was possible that the party could receive great harm because she was dozing off during her time as lookout. Thinking about that, this was a great blunder.

Miranda-san smiled at the apologizing Sophia-san.

「……Now then, we will be busy today.」

Although I said that, there was no floor travelling device from below floor B25, so the number of adventurers challenging that area were few. Recently there wasn't any report to the guild that the boss of floor B30 had been defeated.

The Second muttered with a low voice.

『I wonder why, it feels like we're getting into a trap……it's a strange feeling. I can't erase this bad premonition.』

The Second who had a sharp instinct was speaking really vaguely.

Perhaps there was a need to be careful.

.

Floor B29.

We who advanced through a route that avoided encounters with monsters or other adventurers came to a stop in front of the passage that continued underground.

「……That's troublesome.」

There were multiple monsters and a lizardman holding a torch in the dark passage. The number of monsters moving in the surrounding

area was also a lot. If we made too much noise, the monsters would be lured here.

The Fifth explained my blunder.

『This is the price of trying to avoid everything. If you can grasp the whole picture, then you can also rampage loudly near the entrance to gather monsters there. If you don't fight moderately, you will have it hard when going back.』

I reflected on my mistake while watching the enemy's number and forming a plan.

「……This is manageable. I'll take care of this.」

Novem grabbed my arm.

「Lyle-sama, please don't be reckless.」

It wasn't like I was reckless. It was just more convenient to do it alone in this case. The corridor was wide, but it would be a disaster if it became a free for all and friend and foe became jumbled together. Magic would become unusable then.

「No, I'll be fine alone. Everyone wait here.」

I said that and started running while pulling out my saber. I headed towards the lizardman with a torch and fired magic with my left hand.

「Water Bullet」

Water was generated at my fingertips and created a water ball. It flew towards the torch. The monsters began making a clamor when the fire vanished, but I could perceive my surroundings clearly with the Second's Art, All.

With weapon in hand I approached the panicking lizardman and thrust towards his heart.

When the lizardman fell, the monsters started swinging around their weapons inside the darkness.

「—Oops」

As expected from monsters that were wandering around a dark place, it seemed they could see my position faintly. A club that was swung by an orc grazed above my head.

I aimed at the gap of the iron armor and my saber slid in. Blood spurted from the orc from its sliced neck and it collapsed.

A lizardman swung an axe towards me, but I dodged with a back step. Then the axe's excessive momentum swung it to pierce deeply into a nearby orc.

Friendly fire. This was what I aimed for. As expected, it was the correct choice to fight alone. I slashed my saber at the torso of the lizardman that was troubled from being unable to pull out his axe, then I leaped on the back of the remaining orc that tried to run away and stabbed my saber into his unarmored neck.

「……I don't really care but, why are the lizardmen not wearing armor on their chests or stomachs?」

It was mysterious because they were wearing armor on their shoulders or limbs.

Well, it would be nothing but trouble if they were wearing full body armor though.

The battle was over so I chanted magic of light at that place. Novem and the others came then.

Clara-san looked at me and she seemed to want to say something. But, in the end she prioritized her work and started collecting the magic stones.

Professor Damian rode on his puppet's shoulder while coming my way. He spoke while looking at me.

「I cannot speak about other people but, you— No, as I thought it's alright.」

「No, please say it till the end. Now you made me curious.」

The Fourth's sigh came into my ear.

『It's also important to notice some things by yourself. Lyle, you should think a bit more before taking action.』

Being told that, I wiped my saber's blade and sheathed it. Novem looked at me worriedly.

「Lyle-sama, are you injured?」

「Ah, I'm fine. More importantly let's hurry ahead.」

.

Floor B30.

The floor with a boss in it wasn't structured like a maze. There was only a single straight path.

And then, a round large room existed at the center of the path. It was like a single line piercing through a circle……the floor was like that. Because of that, it was also simple to peek into the boss's room.

The boss was a cylinder object floating unsteadily at the center of the room. It had one eye and four spheres attached below it.

Its appearance was really simple. Its height was three meters. Its width was around two people's worth perhaps?

It sometimes fell and created cracks on the floor. It might be heavier than expected.

Clara-san explained.

「That's the boss of floor B30. Previously the party that I joined brought shields and surrounded it from four directions. They would attack the boss from behind to defeat it. That single eye can fire light that melts various things with heat. Its body tackle is also a threat. If you get hit fully by it you will be flattened……although you will end up even more gruesomely than that in reality.」

We would get melted if we took distance, and got tackled with heavy weight if we came closer……the way to fight it was actually really simple too, but the monster was really troublesome with its great toughness.

Clara-san explained to us several ways to defeat it.

「There is a method to lure it to do its tackle attack, and then everyone will restrain it and beat it up all at once. In that situation, it's important to not stand in front of its eye. Another way is to destroy that single eye. It won't be able to counterattack properly after that eye is crushed.」

I listened to several methods and judged that it was more feasible to aim at its eye rather than surrounding it with our number.

Clara-san warned me.

「Please be careful. You won't be locked inside the boss room, but once you provoke it, the boss will keep chasing you even into this passage. If you think that it's fine even if you fail because you can

escape, then there is the possibility of getting the whole party annihilated.」

That was scary. Certainly, if we were chased by that cylinder thing in this straight path, we would be fired with light from behind and everyone would be melted.

Then, the Third seemed to get an idea.

『Oh, in that case can that enemy be lured into this path? Don't you think that it will be actually fun like that?』

The Sixth was also laughing.

『I see……rather than a spacious place without any place to hide, it feels like it will be far easier to fight like that.』

The ancestors started discussing as though they were scheming again.

『I see, so it will be fine if you fight it here.』

『Narrow path. Having no place to escape will also apply to the enemy here.』

『In that case, those two will be the key.』

『A bait is needed. Or rather, I want more information first.』

『Lyle can do it. Or rather, there is no one else who can do it here.』

『Lyle as bait? Kuh, even though I understand that's the best but accepting it is……』

It seemed, there was a piece of information that the ancestors wanted. I asked about it to Clara-san. Hearing the answer to that, it was judged that there was no problem and I told everyone the plan.

.

—The passage towards the boss room. There were Aria and Sophia near the high ceiling there.

「That guy, there is something completely wrong with his head.」

Aria stabbed her spear into the wall and grabbed it tightly while carrying Sophia in her arm. The weight was lightened by Sophia's Art so that she could hold on for a while even in this state.

Sophia was a bit nervous.

「I have to write off my failure with this……」

Sophia was still bothered by her dozing off when it was her turn as guard. Aria was exasperated.

「Just forget it already. Standing guard is just an addition anyway.」

They had Lyle and they had gone around defeating monsters in the area beforehand. Their safety was as good as secured.

But, Sophia shook her head.

「That's obviously not good. The lives of everyone was entrusted to me. ……But, it's strange.」

「What is strange?」

Sophia answered with a serious face.

「I had eaten and slept enough beforehand. Besides I was asleep until just before dawn when my turn to stand guard came you know? How could I doze off at that time when I had just woken up?」

From Aria's perspective her only impression was 「You were simply still sleepy」. But, Sophia who was normally diligent nodded off to sleep.

It was a fact that she thought was strange.

「Was there something different than usual?」

They continued talking because they had nothing to do until Lyle arrived.

「There wasn't really any? I received the leftover soup and bread from yesterday and ate them, but other than that……」

While they were talking about that, the entrance of the passage became noisy. Lyle ran away from the boss room into the passage, and then the cylinder object that was the boss came floating up and down into the passage in pursuit.

Aria immediately switched her thoughts.

「Its coming. Start preparing.」

Sophia also switched her worried face into a serious face while in her state that was being carried by Aria.

「I'm ready anytime.」

The cylinder that was chasing Lyle fired a beam of light from its eye. When it hit the floor, that place turned red and melted.

There was smoke and a burnt smell. Lyle skillfully ran around and guided the cylinder to the spot right below Aria and Sophia.

Aria thought.

(That guy is acting recklessly again.)

Lyle would think about various things, but he wouldn't talk about his thoughts to Aria and the others. He had a habit of reaching a conclusion on his own.

And then, he would choose the best option but from the viewpoint of everyone, it only looked like he was being reckless. From that attitude it couldn't be felt that he was trusting his comrades.

(If only he would talk to us more properly)

She wanted him to rely on them more. But, she also knew that her own strength was insufficient.

Aria felt chagrined.

「Aria, it's here!」

When the cylinder came right below the two of them, Aria pulled out the spear from the wall and kicked on the wall while carrying Sophia. She landed on the cylinder's head part.

Sophia immediately checked where the cylinder's eye was located, then she flopped their body on the eye to block it and increased their body weight all at once.

「How is that, heavy right!?」

Aria listened to the remark that wasn't really good as a woman while feeling the cylinder was collapsing. She was supporting Sophia.

When the cylinder couldn't hold on and collapsed sideways, Sophia increased the cylinder's own weight this time and it couldn't move.

Aria let go of Sophia and wiped the sweat on her forehead.

「This thing, it was looking shaky because it couldn't support its own weight.」

When she lightly kicked the cylinder with her toes, the cylinder talked.

『—Sy—yu……der-! Ha……ji……』

Aria took distance in surprise.

「Thi, this thing talked!」

She was shocked because the cylinder suddenly talked. The discomfort from watching a monster that wasn't humanoid in appearance talking in human language was also strong.

Then Damian got down from his puppet's shoulder and walked closer.

「I have heard the report about it but, it's unclear what it's talking about. I'm interested but right now I'm busy with other research so I can't investigate it.」

His hand was holding a tool. Damian looked at the head part of the cylinder and dismantled it with his tool.

Mysteriously the head didn't let out even a drop of blood.

「Tha, that's scary for some reason. It's not bleeding, like it's not a living thing.」

Damian told such Aria with a disinterested look.

「That's because it can't be called a living thing. It's not that rare in Arumsaas. Look, I'm opening it.」

Damian said about opening the boss's head, so Aria imagined that it would be really graphic—like a living thing's brain, but there she saw that the inside wasn't really like a living thing at all.

「……What's this?」

It couldn’t be helped that Aria was surprised. The inside was stuffed with metal plate and colored threads that were squeezed together into a jumbled state.

Damian was grumbling while pulling out one of the colored thread and severed it.

「Good grief, even though I said that I’m already used to seeing this so I’m not interested. Err~, is it this? Well, it’s in a good state but that’s all.」

Lyle who acted as bait was tired from running around and sat down on the passage while drinking water.

Novem was watching him looking like she wanted to say something, but Lyle was averting his gaze. He could guess what Novem wanted to say, but it seemed he had no intention to change his mind.

When Damian walked away from the cylinder, Sophia also slowly returned the cylinder’s weight to normal. There was no sign of the cylinder moving.

Clara also approached and began collecting the magic stone and materials.

「This is……we simply need to take out the magic stone and it’s over.」

Aria also moved to help, but Miranda placed her hand on Aria’s shoulder.

「I’ll do this so you can rest.」

「Bu, but」

「It’s fine. Look, I had no turn just now after all.」

Aria was argued down by the smiling Miranda and she nodded.

Aria saw off Miranda who was walking towards Clara and stood still on the spot while having nothing to do—

.

After a break in between, we advanced until floor B32.

But, as expected we ended up having difficulty to advance ahead.

There was also how the monsters were simply strong, but the problems were numerous.

After passing floor B25, the number of adventurers that were active past there became extremely few. Since I detected the adventurer party that was doing their best at floor B27, I didn't discover anymore adventurers.

Because of that, the number of monsters were extremely high.

In order to prepare to make camp, we had to search for a safe room and exterminated the monsters in the surroundings. We secured the area's safety while entering the room, then we immediately got into rest.

After a bit of time passed and I recovered my physical state, I used my Art and materialized the magic circle.

Sophia-san put the cylinder boss she was carrying on the magic circle too. We took out the items we needed, while moving the items we didn't need onto the magic circle.

Professor Damian looked at a wooden box and thought.

「I wonder if I should make one puppet carry this. There is also no chance to use the four of them in battle after all.」

Professor Damian took out the necessary tools and immediately began modifying the wooden box so it could be carried on the puppet's back. He was really a free person.

When we finished the item switching, the magic circle absorbed the luggage and vanished.

Sophia-san was watching that sight with a puzzled look. Her hand was holding a vegetable that was taken out.

「I still don't understand the principle of how the item is stored. The vegetable is still fresh like this.」

I was being supported by Novem that had stood ready beforehand while answering Sophia-san's question.

「Who knows, I also don't understand the principle. But, I simply think that it's convenient.」

Professor Damian was making his puppet to shoulder the wooden box while looking this way and sighing.

「That's a very amazing thing though. If that Art can be reproduced as a magic tool, the world will surely change greatly. Well, I guess it's impossible though.」

A magic tool was an Art that was reproduced into a tool artificially. Even people who didn't have the Art could obtain the same effect in that way.

「Eh? It's not possible?」

Professor Damian seemed to be finished with his work when I was asked in curiosity. He sat on the wooden box and ascertained the sitting comfort.

「It's impossible. From what I saw the mana consumption is too great. Besides it looked complicated so it's impossible to reproduce it with a magic tool. No, it's not impossible if you take no account of the necessary budget but, just how many failures will there be before it succeeds……I'm not interested so I don't feel like doing it though.」

The Seventh was irritated inside the Jewel.

『It will be maddening if my Art can be imitated that easily.』

Professor Damian was looking at Clara-san who was busily preparing the camp.

「There is the light magic she is using right? If it's something that simple then it can be reproduced easily, but for something further than that, the size of the magic tool itself will become bigger and magic ore will be necessary to create it. Magic tools are not as all-purpose as you think. Well, you can obtain Arts more easily with it compared to the Gem that you have there though.」

A Gem would memorize Arts through a long period of time. Speaking about the Jewel that I had, it was the crystallization of the Walt House's history itself. It memorized this many Arts through the period of over two hundred years.

But, with a magic tool you could obtain a simple Art right away.

Gems were left behind and it was the convenient magic tools that were spreading along with the era.

There was something that I wanted to ask a bit in front of Professor Damian.

「Come to think of it, Professor Damian is known as one of the Academy's Seven Best isn't it? Just what are you researching about?」

Clara-san and Miranda-san turned around towards me with a surprised face hearing my words.

Professor Damian jumped down from the wooden box and straightened the position of his glasses.

「……My research is it? It's nothing more than a means to complete a certain thing. I have an ultimate purpose of doing it, but the research itself is nothing more than a process.」

It seemed he had something that he wanted to complete.

「What is that ultimate purpose?」

Professor Damian made a really nice smile. It was different from the fed-up look or disinterested look he was wearing until now. That smile was like the smiling face of an innocent child.

「It's to create an ideal woman for me!」

「……Hm?」

As expected I couldn't reply at the answer that was outside of my imagination. Professor Damian began to speak fervently.

「I have been thinking since the past. Even though there is this ideal woman inside my head, she doesn't exist in this world. People around me would tell me to compromise, look at reality. But I'm different from those foolish commoners. If there isn't one then I can just create her. I reached that conclusion. Like that I started researching, and before I noticed it I became distinguished as an assistant professor, and then a professor. The Academy gave me

some research fund but, they also pushed the worthless job of teaching the students to me. Even though I only want to create my ideal woman!」

The story moved to the Academy's treatment, the hindrance from the students, the research fund that was still insufficient, etc. It was gradually turning into him complaining.

And then, at the end Professor Damian said with a loud voice.

「However! If I can obtain a magic stone like I wish from the request this time, my research will advance further and my objective will come a lot closer. There is no doubt about that. That's why, I want to obtain the magic stone no matter what!!」

For the time being I just nodded.

「I, I'll do my best.」

「Even if you do your best it will be meaningless if it's not accompanied by result you know?」

Professor Damian emphasized further 「Do your job right okay」.

Inside the Jewel, each ancestor said their respective comment towards Professor Damian.

『This is one of the Academy's Seven Best? He is too out of it.』

『No, compromise some. The direction of your effort is mistaken isn't it?』

『However it's amazing. He has climbed up until becoming professor while touting such objective after all.』

『I can appreciate his tenacity but, I cannot comprehend this guy's thinking, I also cannot agree with it.』

『Creating a person is taboo in a sense. Well, I hope it will end only as research.』

『This guy, he isn't a person that can be left to his own devices. Isn't it this guy who we should do something about rather than Shannon?』

The six ancestors were wary towards Professor Damian.

I also honestly thought. Please, keep it as just research.

.

—The next day.

Lyle's party that advanced until floor B39 was executing the plan to reduce the number of the floor's monsters.

Lyle was luring around the monsters as bait.

Novem was harboring dissatisfaction toward such Lyle.

「Why do you keep acting that recklessly?」

Originally it was safer to fight together with everyone. But, Lyle who prioritized efficiency believed in his own strength and acted with that as the basis. That was how it looked like.

Lyle was only asking for the minimum effort from Novem and the others.

From the surroundings came the shouts of the monsters and also explosion sounds sometimes.

Lyle must be using burst arrows or magic.

The voices of the monsters were gradually growing, and then they could sense them approaching.

The entrance of floor B39. There Novem and the others were waiting for Lyle to return with weapons in hand.

Clara called out from behind at Novem who was observing worriedly.

「Lyle-san is really skilled. Though it's a problem that he is so skilled that he concluded everything by himself.」

「……I wish he would rely on us more.」

「I wonder about that. Because if I have to say, it can also be seen as everyone in the party being completely dependent on Lyle-san.」

There were Aria and Sophia ahead of Clara's gaze.

Novem also glanced at the two.

The two of them were holding their weapons but they didn't take a stance. They were talking about something. In contrast, Miranda and Damian had finished their fighting preparations.

(To think that they will be this relaxed)

Just as Clara said, the two of them were becoming remiss because Lyle was too skilled.

(With them like that it's also only natural that he can't rely……it's here)

Novem held her staff with both hands and started preparing the magic that had been decided beforehand.

Miranda also prepared magic with her right hand. Damian was also preparing magic with a large staff that was larger than his own body. With three magicians available, the party's firepower—the offensive power on the whole was absurdly high.

Lyle was running from the front while launching a light source with magic. Behind him there were a lot of monsters following him.

Novem pointed her staff forward in front of the number of monsters that made the passage look cramped.

「Here I go」

Damian nodded. Miranda replied.

「You can start anytime.」

When she fired her magic from the staff, Lyle avoided the fire ball Novem fired and slid towards his comrades.

Next the fire ball that Miranda fired right after it directly hit the monsters. It burst and flames spread out. There Damian added his magic.

「Wind Cannon……come, I'll burn you all together.」

A lump of wind was fired. It swallowed the flame and increased its force, burning up the passage. The scream of death agony of the monsters resounded throughout the passage. And then the flames vanished after a while and the passage was scorched black.

The scorched monsters were lying down on the passage.

Clara put on a mask, called Aria and walked forward to collect the magic stones. Aria stabbed the corpses with her spear to check if any were still alive.

Inside the passage, the smell of charred monsters caused everyone to cover their mouth.

Lyle also did the same. He was covering his mouth with a cloth while breathing hard.

Miranda approached Lyle who was like that and talked to him.

It had happened several times that when Novem was about to talk to Lyle inside the dungeon, Miranda would beat her to the punch like this.

(……It's not really a problem anyway.)

The slightly dissatisfied Novem stood guard against the surroundings. However, Sophia's movement was bad. She didn't even move to help, but she also didn't watch the surroundings.

(Perhaps it will be necessary to scold her firmly once.)

Aria and Sophia's movement suddenly became worse recently. Novem who was thinking about the two thought back to when they started to grow lax like this.

(They weren't like this when we first came to Arumsaas……)

She looked at Miranda who was taking care of Lyle and opened her eyes wide.

(Since they met Miranda-san? No, as expected that's……but, it seems that it's also weighing on Lyle-sama's mind.)

Novem who thought of Miranda as suspicious thought about her motive.

(Was Lyle-sama's imprudent act the cause? But, she wouldn't cooperate this much if that's the case. If she wanted to take revenge, then there are many ways that doesn't need for her to expressly come together to this dangerous place……)

Miranda forgave Lyle, introduced Professor Damian so they could enter the dungeon, and furthermore she also cooperated with them like this.

(Am I over thinking it? No, but……)

Novem looked at Miranda who was having a pleasant chat with Lyle and frowned.

(……Perhaps it's better to be on guard against her.)

Was that the conclusion from thinking calmly, or a feeling that came from jealousy? Even Novem couldn't decide which it was.

Lyle looked around to everyone, and told them to resume moving.

Everyone moved towards a room that was nearby the passage that connected to floor B40. It was spacious, and in addition there were also no monsters around, so they could immediately rest there.

The plan was to challenge the boss of floor B40 after they camped here. Everyone began preparing the camp.

However, Lyle was—

「Then, I'll go down first to check the situation.」

—Starting to say such thing.

Novem felt a headache.

「Lyle-sama, I will also come with you.」

If she left him alone like this, in the worst case he might fight the boss of floor B40 by himself. She thought it wouldn't happen but, Novem who had been watching Lyle's actions until now felt really anxious.

「Eh? But—」

「Please allow me to come with you!」

When she said that with a strong tone, as expected even Lyle nodded 「O, okay」 in surprise.

Like that the two of them went down to floor B40 and walked through the long path.

They advanced while launching light source with magic. The light source didn't follow the two. With this it could be understood just how convenient the magic that Clara had.

Lyle sighed.

「It would have been better to bring a lantern.」

「You're right. ……More importantly Lyle-sama, aren't you keep being reckless recently?」

Novem wanted to warn Lyle in this chance. It was because she was worried, but more than that she understood that at this rate it would become a big problem within the party.

「Is that so? But, there was no problem anyway.」

「It's nothing but a problem. If Lyle-sama is the only one working hard, the others will be—」

「You mean Aria-san and Sophia-san? Certainly the two of them are getting lax but, it's also not a concern right? We can just caution them later.」

The conversation brought up the matter of the difference in strength between Lyle and those two that was too far apart. There were also the Arts that Lyle had. The seven Arts could be said as the things that had supported the Walt House until now. They had that much strength.

And then, the true ability of Lyle who was using them skillfully like it was nothing could be said as abnormal even though it didn't stand out.

To speak in the extreme, Lyle didn't ask anything from Aria and Sophia other than for fighting. He was aware of the two's lack of tension, but he was thinking optimistically about it because he wasn't expecting any further contributions from the two of them than this.

(One day our party will breakdown with this kind of way. If that happens then it will be meaningless to gather the two of them—I have to make him realize no matter what.)

Novem turned a serious gaze towards Lyle, but Lyle stopped her with his hand. When she looked where his gaze was directed at, there was a large gate there.

Behind it was the boss room.

「……Well, naturally the boss is there. But, how should I say it? Is that a large box?」

The boss of floor B40 was an existence that was rarely defeated. That was why, although Lyle understood that the boss would definitely be there, he was bewildered when he actually looked at the boss's figure waiting inside the room.

For Lyle the boss only looked like a large metal box, but Novem was different. She opened her eyes wide and tightly gripped her silver staff in front of the object that shouldn't be there.

(Why is something like that……)

From Novem's perspective, she couldn't even accept that this kind of dungeon existed in Arumsaas. Passage and room that were created

from “concrete”. The “light bulb” and “fluorescent lamps” that were illuminating the passage and room here and there. The device to move between floors……“elevator”.

It was dangerous for this dungeon to exist in Arumsaas where geniuses like Damian and a great number of bright people gathered.

「I can also see large wheels but, there is no horse so it doesn’t feel like a tank. If I remember right in the record it’s……」

Novem was taken aback by Lyle’s words, but she immediately felt relieved.

(That’s right. The one that is pulled by a horse is also called a tank isn’t it.) (TN: In Japan, the kanji for tank and chariot is the same. So you can mishear chariot as tank there)

Novem felt that she was feeling really flustered inside her heart. She stared at the box that was existing inside the boss room without moving, at the “armored tank”—

Chapter 51 – Formidable Enemy

Floor B39.

I finished my scouting, then I talked with Clara-san regarding the countermeasure against the boss while glancing at one other participant.

「Why is Professor Damian also joining the talk?」

Professor Damian's eyes looking brighter than usual.

「Because I'm curious. I feel really excited when I'm curious, or rather doesn't it make you want to thrust your face into it?」

I thought that it wouldn't be interesting even if he participated in this talk, but I returned my gaze from Professor Damian back to Clara-san.

Clara-san looked a bit exasperated for some reason. She asked me with her sleepy looking eyes.

「Lyle-san, I'm happy that you're relying on my knowledge but, don't you think that you should discuss it with the others too?」

「Eh, why? Because, Clara-san is the most knowledgeable after all.」

Clara-san slightly looked down and muttered 「Is that so」 with a slightly disappointed look. Did I do something wrong? The Fourth inside the Jewel was also showing a similar reaction.

『It will sound good if you call it knowing the strong and weak points of your comrades. You can also call it lending your ear to the opinion of the local people. But……this is a problem.』

The Second was worried for me.

『You will commit a great failure at this rate you know? Especially in regards to your relationship with your comrades.』

Clara-san opened her mouth while I was unable to understand what they were saying.

「The boss of floor B40. How much do you know about it?」

I honestly answered.

「I read about it in the past record at the library.」

Although I knew what kind of monster the boss was, in the record of how to defeat it there was only the fighting method of a party that was in a scale of dozens of people. The method to defeat it with several people wasn't written down, so I was consulting Clara-san like this.

「……A spider clad in armor. That's the boss of floor B40. It's hiding its own weak part with an armor that is like a metal box. I, too, have never fought it directly but, I read in a book that it's a really ruthless monster.」

Professor Damian was looking delighted.

「So it's something like a hermit crab. Didn't it cause great damage when it was subjugated previously?」

Clara-san nodded, and then she talked about the basic way to defeat it.

「It seems that it will run around using not only the floor, but even the walls and ceiling inside the room. It has a part that is like a human's upper body, it's a type of enemy that uses its head quite a bit. It will run around the room as it pleases and start aiming from the weak enemies. If we group up in one place, it will use string to

make us unable to move, so the basic is to disperse. There is a record left behind of intentionally making a bait for it to aim at.」

To be more exact, in that method the rear support team members were gathered into one team with several adventurers protecting them.

When the boss aimed at the bait, the other adventurers would attack it. In that case, it would be necessary to aim at its feet as much as possible to shave its mobility. When it became unable to move quickly, the common way was to surround and beat it up. That was the common way, or rather other ways than that had never been tested.

「Our party has few people so another method will be better.」

Professor Damian looked at Clara-san.

「Isn't it fine to make me or her into bait? We will be protected by the puppets so it will be fine.」

「No, if the boss saw the puppets protecting you two, I feel like the boss will stop targeting the two of you. But this is troublesome.」

Was the boss of Arumsaas's underground dungeon troublesome? Or were other dungeons also the same? I, who still had little experience, couldn't judge it. However, there was only one idea that came to mind—

「Should I run away to the passage again?」

Professor Damian nodded.

「That's not a bad idea. More importantly, have you checked if it could get outside with the size of its armor? It's a metal box right?」

I only estimated with my eyes, but I got the feeling that it would be able to enter the passage with that size. Besides, I didn't think that it would be able to move around well. It should be limited in changing direction.

「It can pass into the passage and there its movement will be limited too. It will be advantageous for us.」

Clara-san averted her gaze from us and complained with a mumbling voice.

「Normally it will be a more different way of fighting though. How can you think of this kind of method that is novel, or rather a method that isn't a frontal attack like this? From my view it's really envious.」

From my perspective, it was an idea from a bunch of people with bad personality so I couldn't say anything back.

When I was thinking that, the Third seemed to feel something and complained to me.

『Lyle, just now, did you think of us as having bad personality or something? It's coming out on your face you know.』

The Sixth was also making a faked sad voice.

『That's upsetting. Even though we are suggesting that while thinking for your sake』

Then, don't make me do something like being the bait!

However, the Sixth immediately changed his attitude and laughed.

『Well, putting that aside, that's not a bad strategy. Rather, I can't help but question why didn't we reach the same answer. Fighting an opponent in a situation that is advantageous for him is stupid.』

First, what was about the concept of running away even though you were trying to defeat the opponent? Besides, it was a fact that the act of luring also needed a certain amount of skill.

If the bait was careless, they would easily die after all.

Then, the Second was—

『Well, fundamentally all feudal lordd have bad personalities.』

The Seventh also affirmed that.

『That's right. I'm also of the same opinion as that. Rather, what's bad with having a bad personality!』

The ancestors inside the Jewel started laughing hearing the Seventh's words.

I didn't understand the sense of humor of these people. Or rather, just what was funny?

I concluded the talk.

「Then, this time I'll lure it into the passage again. In that case, I'll enter inside—」

.

—Novem was preparing dinner while watching Lyle and the others.

Lyle and Clara, and Damian who joined from the middle were formulating a plan among the three of them.

(He is ignoring us again.)

Certainly it wasn't wrong to consult with Clara and Damian. Damian also seemed to be smart when it came to something that interested him.

Clara was inferior compared to Damian, but due to her love of book she possessed abundant knowledge. In addition she was a local adventurer. She possessed the necessary knowledge and also knew Arumsaas's underground dungeon well.

It wasn't wrong to consult those two, but the problem was the emotion of Lyle's comrades like Novem who were left out of it.

When she glanced aside, she could see Aria and Sophia who were looking dissatisfied.

(It only feels like we are left out because you don't rely on us, Lyle-sama)

Then Miranda approached the two of them who were like that.

Novem averted her gaze and only focused on listening. She made a show to Miranda as though she was only focusing on the cooking.

Then—

「Eh? Is that okay?」

「It's okay. In exchange, do your best tomorrow.」

「But, having you substituting for us so often like this is……Aria too, you should refuse.」

「But you know, we don't have any place to be useful except in something like this. That's why, please just agree. Okay?」

—Miranda was telling them that she would take over their work.

Before long Miranda who had cajoled the two of them came to Novem's location.

「I'll help. It's hard doing it alone right?」

Novem nodded while smiling.

「Then, please do.」

Miranda helped with the cooking. Looking at her familiar movements, it could be seen that she was often doing the housework. But, Miranda didn't say even a word about her coming here to help in the place of those two.

(I must be overthinking it. But……)

It was suspicious. Inside Novem, her wariness towards Miranda was growing bigger—

.

Night. Novem reported to me before sleeping.

「Miranda-san was?」

I asked back with a small voice and turned my gaze towards Miranda-san who was sleeping with a blanket wrapping her body at the other side of the room. Novem expressly called me to talk at a distance. Since she started talking, I realized that Novem was really wary towards Miranda-san.

「Yes. I think that I'm overthinking it, but it's staying in my mind no matter what. She is cooperating with us for our sake but……」

The way she said it was inarticulate but, I immediately thought of something.

(Shannon-chan—is the effect of her mystic eye coming out here?)

The Sixth advised me.

『I'm not so sure that those two becoming strangely lax is completely Miranda's fault. But, there is still a possibility of her setting up something.』

There was also the possibility of Shannon-chan giving Miranda-san some kind of order. From how they looked like in the hospital room, I could also feel that the mind control on Miranda-san had progressed quite far.

「So it was too late even if I separated the two of them physically……」

「Lyle-sama?」

Novem didn't miss my low murmur and looked at my face. I couldn't give an explanation to Novem who didn't know about the matter of the mystic eye, so I shook my head.

Besides, it was better that she didn't know. I didn't want Novem to know anything about the matter of taking away a girl's sight.

「It's nothing. I'll also be on my guard, so Novem too, be careful.」

Novem who was looking at my face slightly narrowed her eyes. She looked like she had noticed something.

「Lyle-sama, could it be you know something?」

The Second whistled inside the Jewel.

『Novem-chan is really sharp. But, it's better that she doesn't know about it.』

The Third also seemed to think that it was better to not discuss this matter with Novem.

『Girl is sharp after all. But, just this time let's have her be patient of being kept out of the loop. Besides, Aria-chan and Sophia-chan are also the same. It's better for these three to not get involved in this matter.』

The Fifth also agreed.

『Yeah. This is the Walt House's problem.』

I answered with a light tone jokingly.

「I remember doing something that would justify her going as far as taking revenge on me after all. …….I'm just joking, don't glare at me.」

Novem couldn't accept it as a joke and turned a serious gaze to me. I averted my gaze and scratched my cheek.

「I will also be on my guard. Besides, perhaps she really doesn't have any bad intention right? She also has cooperated with us until this far.」

Novem seemed to know that too. She nodded at my opinion.

The Fourth was surprised inside the Jewel.

『Even so, it's actually Miranda who turned those two to become no good? Certainly, if she told them that she will take care of their work then……I can understand how it is now, but what is the meaning of her doing that?』

The Seventh raised a conjecture.

『Perhaps rather than directly aiming at Lyle, she is trying to break up Lyle's party indirectly? Her personality is unexpectedly nasty.』

A loud sound resounded. It seemed the Sixth hit the table.

『There is no way Miranda who inherited Milleia's character will do something like that! You should also know how Milleia is!』

The Seventh looked bewildered while answering.

『No, there is also the possibility of her getting manipulated by Shannon, besides aunt Milleia's personality is also, that……』

The Seventh talked evasively. The Fifth unusually became the one who calmed down the place.

『In any case, you can only stay on your guard. We don't know what that Shannon is scheming. You have to be ready so you can deal with anything as much as possible.』

If possible, I didn't want to end up fighting against Miranda-san. It would be unpleasant to be forced to fight such kind person.

.

Floor B40, boss room.

We finished our preparations and reviewed our plan in front of the boss room for the last time.

「I'll act as bait again this time. After that I'll go to the passage—」

Aria-san nodded while interrupting the continuation of the plan with fast-talking.

「We will jump on the boss just like before and hold it in place. It's the same like before right?」

It seemed she was a bit irritated. I turned my gaze from Aria-san to Sophia-san.

「I understand.」

She replied shortly, but the tone of her voice was hard. It felt like she was angry.

「……The, then, the other members will wait slightly further away. In case we failed, Professor Damian, please take care of it.」

Professor Damian placed his staff on his shoulder and nodded happily.

「Leave it to me. Haha~, to think we'll be able to fight the boss of floor B40 this quick. It was the right decision to leave this to all of you—no, to you. Thank you for introducing him to me……err~, who are you again?」

Professor Damian wanted to say thanks to Miranda-san for introducing us, but he didn't remember her name.

「It's Miranda, professor. You won't remember me even though I'm also attending your class properly.」

'Geez', Miranda-san said with a half expasperated smile. Professor Damian said 「That's right」 to her while laughing.

「Well, I don't remember even a single student that I have taught until now though. Anyway, if the two of them failed, I'll hold back the boss with my puppets. I can buy some time at least. This is for the magic stone's sake.」

Professor Damian's attitude that was honest to his own desire to the very end felt refreshing instead.

I looked at Novem.

「Please guard Clara-san. Depending on the situation you can also evacuate temporarily to the upper floor.」

Novem reluctantly accepted me being the bait. The reason was because there was no one else who was suitable to do it. Novem nodded.

「Lyle-sama too, please absolutely don't do anything reckless.」

Inside the Jewel the Fourth was looking at the worried Novem while saying something.

『Sooner or later you'll have to solve the problem on this side too. Even so, I'm getting sick that the problems keep on coming.』

I ignored him and nodded back at Novem, and then I entered the boss room. I took a step inside and observed the situation, but it seemed there was no movement.

Two steps, three steps.

「So even this is no good.」

I took out a bow and arrow and shot burst arrow at the large metal box. It hit the box and a bursting sound resounded inside the room, but that was all.

There wasn't a single scratch on the box.

「……That hardness is frustrating.」

And then I resolved myself and approached the boss. Then, the box shook and started making a small sound. At the end it made a rumbling sound, and then there was the sound of creaking metal and the door at the box's sides opened. There were two spots that opened and from there eight hairy legs appeared.

Next the cover at the box's ceiling opened and an eerie face came out from there. It had two red eyes and a mouth with a crescent moon shape. It looked like it was laughing.

I took out a burst arrow and fired it toward the legs. However, the legs weren't even staggered and lifted themselves up along with the large box.

「It doesn't work as expected. Or rather, it's really a spider inside a box.」

And then the figure of a human's upper body slowly appeared from the opened cover. Slender torso. Eerie head. And then arms that were slender with only their hands that were abnormally big compared to the arms.

It eerily laughed *kishi kishi* and licked its lips when it looked at me. It was really revolting.

I stored away my bow and slowly backed away—

「Well, of course it won't let me go that easily!」

The eight legs moved quickly and chased after me. I hurriedly used Arts and raised my running speed, even so, the floor boss—it was a spider inside a box, so box spider.

The box spider chased after me with even greater speed.

The stupid cheers of the Third came from inside the Jewel.

『Do your best~, it will be the end if it catches you~』

In order to meet the expectation of the unmotivated cheer, I threw away the quiver I carried. It was a product that was quite expensive but it couldn't be helped.

The quiver that was filled with burst arrows got stepped by the box spider's leg and caused explosions. Even though a single explosion was meaningless against it, but the consecutive explosions caused smoke which was useful to stop the box spider at least.

I continued escaping into the passage, turned around and then unsheathed my saber.

The box spider put its hands on the passage's gate and slowly looked at me while passing through. It was laughing. It seemed intent to torment me. It was a really unpleasant guy.

But—

「My bad. It's you who is being hunted.」

From above a red haired girl and a black haired girl dropped down and landed on the box part of the box spider. *Bang* and *Bam* sounds resounded, then the box spider turned its head 180 degree to look behind.

Aria-san readied her spear to protect Sophia-san.

「This thing, it's really eerie.」

And then Sophia-san's hand touched the box.

「This thing, it's really heavy from the start……with thisssss!」

She used her Art and manipulated the weight. The box spider became unable to endure its weight with its legs and fell down on the passage. Its legs were kicking around.

「Yosh-, like this!」

The instant I thought we could do this, the box spider swung its long arms and sent Aria-san and Sophia-san flying.

The two of them were blown away from the box, then the rear part of the box opened and the spider's butt appeared. And then it spurted out sticky strings that entangled the two of them.

「Thi, this—!」

「Le, let go!」

The two were squirming on the floor. They seemed uninjured, but they couldn't move like that.

When I hurriedly jumped on the box spider's box part, its weight returned to normal and it rampaged around.

In the passage where it couldn't even change direction, it moved up and down to shake me off. In addition, it seemed to be irritated that I got on the box and swung its arms at me.

「This guy!」

While the arm approached to capture the prey, I took a defensive stance because it was a battle on an unstable place, but the box spider's movement suddenly stopped.

Looking around, the puppets of Professor Damian were hanging on the legs of the box spider.

Professor Damian swung his staff.

「Come on, my job is finished with this. The rest—」

I tightly grasped my two sabers.

「—is my job!」

The twisting of the box spider's face didn't hide its irritation. It swung its arm at me in a large arc. When I severed that arm with my saber, its red eyes opened wide.

It swung its other arm to me, so I severed it with my other saber.

「I'll defeat you.」

I swung my two sabers and bisected its neck and torso. When the struggling legs stopped moving, the box fell to the floor. And then, I put back my sabers into their sheaths and grasped my Jewel.

「Lyle-san, please be careful! That thing is—」

—This thing was shrewd.

Clara-san didn't even need to yell, I moved my right hand to tear off the Jewel in my grasp. The silver great sword showed its figure, at the same time the box spider discarded the box by backing away.

It sacrificed its legs that were grabbed by the puppets and exposed its hideous main body. Its torso was square perhaps because it was contained within a box. A lot of large mouths and eyes could be seen on its flat surface. If that shape was called simple then it was simple, but it only gave me the creeps.

「My bad, I already investigated about you thoroughly. Even—how you would escape like this at the end!」

The instant it showed itself, I tightly grasped the silver great sword and jumped to above the box spider's main body before stabbing it. The silver great sword was shaking in order to rampage, but it was only widening the wound of the box spider that was deeply stabbed.

The box spider was raising a loud scream while fiercely moving its remaining legs to struggle.

Like that it stopped moving at the end and I returned the silver great sword to being a Jewel. It was sticky from being coated with the box spider's fluid.

Looking closer, thread came out from the box spider's butt.

Miranda-san came to look at the box spider and looked impressed with the thread.

「Come to think of it, isn't this a really precious material?」

Professor Damian who approached in order to take out the magic stone wasn't interested in the thread. He entered the work of dismantling the box spider.

Clara-san glanced at Professor Damian before coming this way.

「Yes. It will be a really sturdy thread or a thread with amazing stickiness. This one is……the really sturdy thread.」

Either one would be a precious material and extremely expensive.

The Second seemed to be a bit puzzled.

『How can a material that rarely appears be expensive? It's not even a rare metal, in addition obtaining it is really troublesome, so there isn't any stable supply of it. Is there anyone who will want this kind of thread?』

The Third answered casually.

『Isn't it because someone has discovered its utility value? Even so, there is a lot of it.』

The quantity of the thread that it let out at its last struggle was quite a lot.

While I was tired and couldn't move, Novem headed towards the two who were captured. Aria-san and Sophia-san were caught by the sticky thread and couldn't move.

How should I say it, their squirming caused their clothes to dig into their bodies and exposed their body line. Their appearance became disastrous. To describe it in a few words, it could also be said to be a provocative appearance, but the two of them desperately trying to get out of it made it even worse.

「So, someone helpp!」

「Turn this to here, and then this one……no good, my, my chest feels tight! It's digging in……」

The clothes dug in and some parts were slipping off.

Putting it simply, it was erotic.

Novem was lending her hand in order to release the two, but it looked really difficult.

「Both of you, please don't move around. If it's like this then cutting a part of the cloth is……」

I couldn't properly look at them, so I turned my gaze towards Professor Damian. Professor Damian was soaked with the box spider's fluid while rubbing his cheek against the large red magic stone he was holding with both hands.

Its size made it necessary for the petite Professor Damian to hold it with both hands. And then, the transparent red color made it look like a jewel.

「Nufufufu, if I have this then it will finally move——」

When Professor Damian spoke until that point, the sound of something falling came from the boss room.

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When I hurriedly headed to the boss room to scout, an object with size and shape that looked like a coffin was stuck in the floor.

It was made from metal but rather than silver its color was closer to grey. It looked like a genuine coffin, there was a window to peer

inside. However, the window was cloudy and the inside couldn't be seen.

Thinking of the possibility that a monster was lurking inside, everyone except Professor Damian surrounded it. Then I approached and tried touching it. But, there was no reaction.

Then, Professor Damian entered inside the room while holding the magic stone in his arms.

「Professor, it's still dangerous here.」

When Miranda-san warned him, Professor Damian opened his eyes wide. And then he grinned. It seemed it wasn't dangerous.

「This is shocking. To think that we will get a hold of this again. I never even dreamed of it. This can happen on rare occasion in the dungeon. Obtaining a treasure after defeating a boss. There is also those who call it a "rare drop" but……this thing really is rare. It's an object with rarity value. After all it's an object that there are only two even in the Academy.」

I asked Professor Damian.

「Do you know about this box?」

「Not just knowing it, I have one myself. My objective this time is related with the content of the same coffin like this. I sought this magic stone in order to awaken it. However, I wonder……your name is Ly, Lyle was it? You have a really good luck. How about it, do you want to try activating its content?」

While I was bewildered hearing that it could be activated, Professor Damian began explaining. But, Clara-san and Miranda-san were shocked saying 「Professor Damian said someone's name!」.

「It looks like a coffin, but the inside isn't human. It's an automaton. An automatic puppet—we have learned that it's a mechanical puppet in the shape of a human that can move by itself. In addition its construction is really elaborate. What I'm interested in is the knowledge and technology that created such a high level thing. That's why I want to activate it, but this thing is necessary to produce the required energy.」

Professor Damian held the large magic stone with both hands and looked at the coffin.

「The automaton created by the ancient people. ……Lyle, don't you also want to try seeing it?」

The smile of Professor Damian there was something that was stimulated by curiosity.

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The passage of floor B40.

We stuffed our baggage into the box part of the box spider that we obtained.

I generated a magic circle right under the box while everyone other than me was sorting the baggage.

「Aa~, no good. It feels like it's slightly over the limit.」

We pondered about what to do with the large box, and in the end we decided to bring it back but……it was just barely over the capacity limit of my Art, Box. Because of that we repacked the baggage.

Novem kicked the coffin we had just obtained to push it into the box. I was really surprised seeing her acting that unusual.

「Novem, why did you kick it!? We will activate that thing later so treat it carefully.」

Novem turned around with a smile.

「My apologies, Lyle-sama. ……I unconsciously」

Unconsciously? You kicked it with such feeling? Did she perhaps have some dissatisfaction piling up inside?

But, thanks to that it felt like the Art could manage somehow. The box slowly sunk into the magic circle.

We stopped for a night in floor B40 and finished the baggage sorting like this.

Various things happened but, now we only needed to return.

When the magic circle vanished, Novem supported me.

Professor Damian was holding on the magic stone like it was something precious. It didn't look like he would let go of it.

Aria-san shouldered her spear.

「After this we are going to head up like this, but what are we going to do today? We will be able to go until floor B25 that has the floor traveling device if we force ourselves isn't it?」

Clara-san shook her head.

「Let's aim until floor B29. If we are careless, there is also the possibility of the boss at floor B30 reviving. The number of days of its revival isn't accurately determined after all. It will depend on the situation at floor B30, but if the boss isn't there then we will secure an area at floor B29 and stay for a night there.」

Sophia-san tilted her head.

「Why? It's only going back.」

Clara-san pushed up her glasses with her finger to correct its placement. And then, she turned a serious expression towards us.

「No one is monitoring the inside of the dungeon. And then, the risk of the people in this trade—our fellow adventurers attacking us will be the greatest when we are heading up back to the surface. After all at that time we will have a lot of baggage so it will be hard for us to move around and we will be exhausted. There will be a lot of adventurers in the floors above floor B29. So just in case we should be on our guard.」

They would attack us in order to take away the magic stone and materials we gathered. Similar to monsters, no……humans were far more troublesome than a monster.

Sophia-san nodded in understanding, but her expression wasn't good.

Novem concluded the talk.

「Then, let's head to floor B29. Lyle-sama, is that alright?」

「Yeah, that's okay. Everyone is also okay with that right?」

When I turned my gaze towards everyone, my gaze stopped on Miranda-san just for an instant. Her smile was the same like usual. However, her atmosphere changed just for a moment.

The Sixth's Art told me that. Search……this Art that distinguished enemy and ally by the presence or absence of hostility displayed Miranda-san as red color that had hostility just for an instant.

「That's nice. I don't want to be attacked at the end after coming this far.」

There was no change with Miranda-san at the surface. But, she was harboring a definite hostility towards me.

The Fifth sighed deeply. And then he warned me.

『Lyle, be careful from here on. Don't let your guard down until the very end.』

I quietly grasped the Jewel.

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—Floor B29.

Lyle's party safely found a room where they could camp.

Aria was wiping her body with hot water at the place that Clara prepared. About the men, right now Damian was sleeping while holding on the magic stone, while Lyle was also sleeping with a blanket covering him.

Aria wiped her wet hair while looking at Lyle.

「That Lyle, he is sleeping without eating dinner? He is really tired isn't he?」

When Novem who was preparing the meal saw Lyle's blanket was opened, she stood up and slowly walked toward Lyle.

She put back the blanket on him and wiped the sweat on his forehead.

(She is like a mother. Well, perhaps it can't be helped with how long they know each other?)

She approached the fire while having that impression. The magic tool that Clara prepared could create fire even without any firewood or fuel.

On top of that a pot could be placed on it so it was extremely useful.

「This is really convenient. It will work when a magic stone is inserted into it, so shouldn't we also buy something like this?」

Novem went away, so Miranda watched the pot in her place.

Clara lifted her gaze from the book she was reading and looked toward the lantern.

「There are many tools like this in Arumsaas after all. It's an environment where it's easy to develop technology with the great amount of magic stones and rare metals they obtain here.」

The lantern would also emit light if a magic stone was put into it. Although, the magic tool Clara was using was brighter, so it was only used when resting like this.

Miranda talked to Aria.

「Aria, you will stand guard after this right? Eat properly before that.」

When Aria turned her gaze towards the entrance, Sophia was standing guard there. Even though it would be alright even if she sat down, she was standing with her hand holding her battle axe. Its blade was placed on the floor while her hand was placed on the pommel.

(She is serious as usual. Just dozing off once isn't a problem……Lyle has confirmed the safety here, so it should be fine if she relaxed a bit.)

Aria was thinking that was also because of Lyle's enemy detection ability that was too high. Aria completely trusted Lyle's ability.

Clara closed her book and received a bowl of soup from Miranda.

「I will also sleep after eating. Aria-san, I think you already know but standing guard is an important job.」

Aria was flustered from Clara's reminder.

「I, I know that!」

She received the soup from Miranda and brought it to her mouth. Then, Novem returned and thanked Miranda—

.

—After a while, Miranda checked that everyone was asleep.

Aria who alternated with Sophia to be a guard was sitting down and sleeping. Novem too was leaning on a wooden box while sleeping.

There was only Miranda who was awake even though it was arranged that two people would always be awake at all times.

「……I have put the drug into Professor Damian's drink, and Clara also drank the soup. Everyone won't wake up for a while.」

She stood up and pulled out the short sword on her waist before walking towards Lyle without hesitation. Lyle who was wrapped in blanket didn't drink the drugged soup. But, he was terribly tired and immediately slept after preparing the camp.

「It must be hard to be able to do everything alone. Like that fatigue will pile up for you alone like an idiot. Now then, I think I'll have Lyle-kun take responsibility for making fun of me.」

Saying that Miranda's hand that was holding the short sword in reverse grip—swung down on Lyle's vital place without hesitation. It was a sharp attack with no indecision.

However, what the sword stabbed was the blanket and floor. The sound of the sword tip colliding on the floor resounded.

「……Oh, so you're awake.」

Lyle rolled away from the blanket the moment the sword was swung down. He was currently standing up.

His hand was holding a saber.

Miranda looked at Lyle's sabers that were on a wooden box some distance away. She collected it from the sleeping Lyle and placed it far away.

「So you hid a spare nearby, that means you were suspecting me then.」

Sweat was trickling on Lyle's cheek. He looked shaken, but it was clear that he was suspicious of Miranda seeing how prepared he was.

「……Novem said, that Miranda-san was acting suspiciously. After that, there is Shannon-chan's eyes.」

Miranda laughed at Lyle's words.

「What, so you know. Come to think of it, those eyes were inherited from great grandmother. In other words, it originated from the Walt House. It won't be strange for you to know about it.」

Miranda pulled out another short sword and took a stance with a short sword in either hand. Lyle unsheathed his saber, but its quality looked worse than the sabers Miranda took away.

He held the sheath in his left hand and the saber in his right hand.

「Miranda-san, please open your eyes. You are a kind person.」

Miranda thought when Lyle said that with a sad look.

(……Ha?)

「You, what are you saying?」

「I know that you are being controlled by Shannon-chan. But, if you strengthen your heart—」

Miranda pressed her stomach and started laughing after hearing what Lyle said. It was really funny and completely stupid.

(Aa, I see. Lyle-kun doesn't know then. About Shannon—)

Lyle who was being laughed at looked wide eyed, then Miranda kicked on the ground without warning and sprang at Lyle with a slash. The saber and short sword locked with each other.

Miranda brought her face close to Lyle and told the truth.

「You are stupid. Do you really believe that I'm a good and obedient girl?」

「—Eh?」

Miranda watched Lyle's surprised face while kicking at his stomach. From the feedback, she understood that he immediately jumped behind.

(He is strong as expected.)

「It's Shannon that you are wary of but, if I have to say it's that girl who is kinder. And then, the one who Lyle-kun should really be wary of is……me you know?」

Miranda slightly tilted her head and told the truth to Lyle. The one who he should be wary of wasn't Shannon, but her—

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What Miranda-san said from her mouth was that it wasn't Shannon-chan who I should be wary of—

「You are stupid aren't you? I'll praise you for noticing Shannon's eyes, but that's all that can be praised from you. You are really just a child who is only strong.」

I crouched and checked my situation.

I had a short sword and a spare saber with me. My left hand was holding the sheath and my right hand the saber.

After that—

「Tsk!」

I blocked the attack of Miranda-san who slashed at me and tried to hit her with the sheath, but she turned her body around. That movement that was experienced in fighting made me get cold sweat.

「Academy students aren't learning combat techniques in addition are they?」

We slashed and defended against each other while talking. Miranda-san was looking composed.

「I told you before. I can do anything skillfully. I……until now never had any difficulty so I didn't understand it but, I can do almost anything if I give it a try.」

I blocked a spinning kick with my arm, and then I roughly struck with the sheath but it was blocked by the short sword.

I could hear the disbelieving voice of the Sixth from inside the Jewel on my chest that was swaying from the intense movement.

『No way……lies. Miranda who is like the exact resemblance of Milleia is』

Ignoring the Sixth who was shaken from learning the truth, the Fifth gave me instruction.

『Lyle, you can't say that she isn't in a manipulated state right now! Capture her no matter what!』

The Third showed me a possibility.

『Lyle, with my Art you might be able to obstruct any manipulation on her mind. How about you try using it?』

Honestly speaking, it was hard.

I had rested for a bit, but I had been using my mana until the very limit every day. There was fatigue remaining in my body and I could only fight at full strength for several minutes.

I also couldn't say that my mana had recovered enough.

I took a deep breath, and then I chanted 『Mind』 inside my mind and looked at Miranda-san. However, Miranda-san was only smiling calmly.

The Second was surprised.

『Oi, it's not working at all!』

The Seventh seemed to comprehend something.

『I guess it's just to be expected from the great granddaughter of aunt……』

This time I stepped forward to initiate the attack, but Miranda-san put away her short sword and threw a knife. The Second yelled when

he saw the knife with blade that looked similar to an arrowhead and seemed easy for throwing.

『Lyle, don't touch that-!』

Believing in the Second's instinct, I immediately rolled to the side to dodge. Then, the knife exploded when it collided on the wall. When I turned around that way in surprise, Miranda-san took advantage of that opening by throwing her short sword and knives as though to press me back.

The sight that I saw while dodging was the cracked wall and the scorched mark.s And then the rising smoke from that spot.

「Oh, you have a good instinct. Even so, that Art that makes it as though you have eyes behind you……All was it? That's troublesome.」

I turned towards Miranda-san and opened my mouth—

「You want to ask me where did I hear it from right? Aria and also that girl Sophia are really honest. They easily talked to me when I flattered them a bit and praised you. I made them feel indebted to me, and it looked like you also made them feel inferior so it was easy.」

The Fourth seemed to be surprised too.

『Don't tell me, the cause of the two of them being that lax was really—』

「The two of them growing relaxed like that, could it be—」

「That's right. I slightly directed them. I approached them with an offer to do their job for them and showed so that it looked like they are being lax. I also used Sophia for experimenting with the sleeping

drug, but that time too she only thought of it as her being too lax. I'm relieved that it went smoothly. Well, there was also me wanting to worsen the mood of the party though.」

I gritted my teeth. I felt embarrassed of myself that didn't trust Aria-san and Sophia-san and only thought of it as them being lax.

But, Miranda-san immediately took out two of that peculiar knife. A knife that looked similar to a burst arrow's arrowhead. She had several of them.

「But, it's not just my fault. You are also at fault. This party might breakup sooner or later even without me doing anything.」

She broke into a run and threw the two knives to different directions. She expressly missed.

And then, she stood in front of me unarmed.

「Don't look down on me-!」

I would get near and capture her. The Seventh yelled when I was thinking that.

『Lyle, don't chase her too deep! Miranda's aim is—』

There were two explosions right after that. The blast from each of them shook my balance. While the surrounding was enveloped in smoke, I looked at my left arm.

「—Guh」

A short sword was stabbed there. It wasn't deep so I immediately pulled it out and threw it away.

「It's useless even if you hide in the smoke—e, eh?」

I tried to locate Miranda-san right away, but my left hand started to go numb and I dropped the sheath I was holding.

It wasn't just my hand that was shaking. Arm, shoulder……the numbness was gradually spreading to my whole body.

Then, several slender knives flew out from inside the smoke. At the same time a sticky thread flew at me. I couldn't even dodge and the knives stabbed my thigh and right shoulder. My arm and torso got fastened to each other by the thread.

While I was trying to move somehow, the smoke cleared up quickly. Miranda-san was approaching me.

「Dungeon is really inconvenient. Even though I wanted to cause a dust explosion just like this, the smoke is clearing up right away. This environment that is matching to humans is also a puzzle isn't it? ―Right, Lyle-kun!」

The distance was closed and then I got my stomach kicked. I fell face up. The sticky thread hardened and so I didn't get stuck on the floor. But, I couldn't move.

Miranda-san kicked away the saber that I let go.

「Even though you can sense me there are many ways to deal with that. Do you understand?」

Miranda-san said that with a smile, and then she kicked me over. My gaze turned toward where Novem and the others were at, but everyone was sleeping and showed no sign of waking up.

The Third was slightly frustrated.

『Paralyzing drug and sleeping drug……how troublesome. Lyle, can you move?』

While I was unable to reply, the Thrid considered it as affirmation and spoke.

『Buy some time. Just think of that right now.』

I was breathing in pain and talked to Miranda-san.

「……Just, what is your purpose—!」

A knife was stabbed deeply into my left thigh. When I turned my face toward Miranda-san, she was looking down on me expressionlessly.

「Purpose is ittt……making you take responsibility I guess. Well, also various other things while I'm at it?」

I turned my gaze to Miranda-san and listened to her talking without provoking her.

「You know, even someone like me thought that you would be good. I was living by acting the good and obedient girl in my life until now while keeping down the seething anger deep inside……when I met you the first time, could it be, fate!? I held that kind of hope.」

Miranda-san who twisted her body while blushing kicked me. The place the tip of her boots hit was terribly painful. She completely understood where to hit to cause pain.

The Fifth's voice talked to me.

『She kicked at a nasty spot. That spot will cause the pain to linger for a while……』

Miranda-san's face turned serious and took a knife before throwing it at me. And then she stepped on the knife.

「Uguh! ……Gah!」

She grinded on the knife with her foot while smiling seeing me suffering in pain.

「The numbness has receded isn't it? I chose one that has immediate effect but recedes quickly. Because, if not then even the pain will be dulled. That will be boring. Err~, I was in the middle of talking right? You know, I really held hope for you. Lyle-kun who was disinherited from the Count house.」

I endured the pain while talking to Miranda-san.

「Haa……tsu! ……Was it……because, there was the talk of engagement with me?」

Miranda-san grinded on the knife while smiling even now.

「Correct. I'll add one more knife as reward.」

She said that and threw a knife at me. I gritted my teeth and endured the pain from the knife that stabbed into my calf.

Miranda-san sighed and folded her arms under her breast.

「An encounter with a man that my family had a talk of engagement with in the past in a completely unrelated place. I really held high hope. On our first date, I did my best to put on cosmetics and also gave my all with various other things, and yet……you really are the worst.」

She kicked me strongly and I coughed.

And then Miranda-san stepped on my head hard.

「You made Aria and Sophia, and even your actual former fiancée to wait upon you……is it fun? As a boy it must be fun for you. But, from a woman's perspective that's sure not fun at all. They seem to keep quiet, but both Aria and Sophia are feeling discontent. Your former

fiancée who is compelling them into that……is a bit strange isn't she?」

I couldn't say anything back regarding Novem, but I never thought that the two would be disgruntled. No, surely they had dissatisfaction but, I didn't understand so far as to what kind of dissatisfaction they had.

「……Why, are you intentionally doing something this elaborate?」

Miranda-san removed her foot from me and then her face turned sad.

「My revenge. And then, it's to make Shannon understand the power of her own eyes. If some of you died and only me and few others return to the surface, even that child will understand her own power. ……It looks like that child is happy she can control me, but bluntly speaking the power of her eyes is weak. Compared to the record that great grandmother left behind, she cannot even pull out ten percent of the eye's ability.」

Great grandmother—Milleia-san was leaving behind a record. That was surprising.

「You, investigated a lot.」

「Shannon couldn't see since she was born after all. It's fundamental to investigate various things in order to search the cause right? It's fine if I just investigated back through the family tree, so it was simple. Although, Otou-sama doesn't know that his grandmother was blind. Really, what a pathetic man. I had it hard because of that. Even so, from my perspective you who know about that eye is also amazing enough though?」

The conversation continued. Because it was necessary to buy time.

I looked up at Miranda-san.

「So you know, everything? How Shannon-chan's eyes are special too?」

「Of course I will notice when I'm living together with her. That child thinks that I don't notice though. Well, she is cute like that so I'll forgive that. It was also Shannon who played pranks and made the servants quit, but that's also alright. That child is kind after all. Surely she didn't want them to get dragged into this.」

「Kind?」

There was one of the short swords that Miranda-san threw under the hardened string. I wriggled my body and moved bit by bit continuously until the binding was undone.

「That's right. That child is stupid, cute, and kind. She is the same kind like Aria. Sophia is a different type but she is the same. Those girls are idiots, that's why they are cute.」

While I was thinking that the two were pitiful because they were called idiots, I also wanted to agree just slightly.

「……You, do you know what Shannon is going to do?」

I spoke the conjecture that I and the ancestors thought up.

「Revenge towards the house that shunned her. She is using Miranda-san as a pawn for that revenge……is that not it?」

Miranda-san was laughing.

「Wrong answer. The revenge, no, the payback that child mentioned. You see—」

I doubted my ears when I heard what that payback entailed.

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—The hospital where Shannon was hospitalized.

Recently, the rumor that the ghosts of children were appearing at midnight inside the hospital was spreading, but everything was peaceful other than that.

Shannon was waiting for Miranda who still hadn't returned while eating sweets.

「Onee-sama still hasn't returned yet? Even though it will be fine if she quickly showed those people a painful experience and returned. That Lyle guy has troubled Onee-sama, so it will be great if he meets a really painful experience.」

She would forgive him with that.

Shannon who thought such thing then pondered about the mischief she would inflict to her house now that Miranda had fallen under her control.

「When Onee-sama returns, I'll go home immediately and make them pay! I'll put bugs inside Doris-oneesama's dress! I'll doodle on Otou-sama's important documents so that he will be embarrassed at work. And then, I'll blame everything on Onee-sama! She betrayed me and turned me into laughingstock……you can get scolded because of that. And then perhaps I'll forgive her after that.」

And then she remembered.

「Da, damn it! I have to think of how to pay back that woman too! Err~, what will be good I wonder? A, as I thought it's bugs? Bugs are scary after all, even that woman will absolutely hate it won't she?」

Shannon put her hand on her chin above the bed and pondered.

「I, I'll put bugs in her food? No, as expected that's too much. Even someone like me cannot go as far as that. But, in that case what kind of payback will……」

Shannon who was at her wits' end never even dreamed that Miranda would be trying to kill Lyle and the others—

.

『……Who was it, the guy who said a lot of exaggerated things like mystic eyes or whatever?』

『Playing pranks is a bad thing, even so someone who wanted to crush a girl's eyes just because of that really gives me the creeps.』

『Isn't that adorable. And, what was it you guys said about mystic eyes?』

『……Shut up!』

『Why is Miranda who looks exactly like Milleia being like this—』

『Well, if she is similar with aunt, then this isn't that surprising. However, this is unexpected.』

Floor B29. I who was in the middle of camping was being restrained and tormented by Miranda-san right now.

Because of my faked hitting on a girl, it ended up as something unthinkable like this. I understood until that point. But, I never thought that our conjecture would be completely wrong.

The me who said something like please open your eyes with a serious face was really embarrassing. After all Miranda-san wasn't controlled from the beginning.

In other words, she was a person with a true character who could do something like this. She was a bit, no, a really scary person.

「The best that she can think of is only to put bugs inside Doris's dress or doodle on Otou-sama's paperwork. But, she is also trying to make a move on that woman……your little sister, that's why I'm watching after Shannon in this city.」

My little sister—Celes. Miranda-san saw me grimacing and smiled.

「Oh, do you have bitter memories of your little sister?」

When I averted my gaze, Miranda-san stepped on me. She grinded her shoe sole and looked down on me with a smirk.

「Tell me of it, Lyle-kun who was disinherited and chased out from his house.」

Amidst that, the Third's voice loudly came.

『—Lyle, you've bought enough time.』

When I wriggled, Miranda-san kicked me over. In that instant she made a curious face but it was already too late.

「Short sword? Don't tell me—」

I unfastened the restrain and pulled out my knife which I threw toward Miranda-san. Miranda-san dodged, but I knew she would do that.

I endured the pain and broke into a run to pick up my weapon. But, in front of me—at the place where everyone was sleeping, there was wire stretched around that blocked me from advancing.

「What's this……wire?」

When I turned around, Miranda-san was slowly walking towards me. Seeing how she was broadly grinning, she must have a trump card.

「That's unfortunate. You can't go further than that. That's why, it's also impossible for you to get out of this room.」

There was the entrance at the other side of the laid out wire. No one woke up even though we made this much ruckus, so the sleeping drug that was used seemed to be really strong.

I pulled out my remaining knife and calmed down my breathing.

「A trump card is something that you must have in reserve.」

Miranda-san's right hand—the fingertips were letting out thread. She swung her right hand, so I rolled to the side to dodge. But the thread clung on the laid out wire, forming a sticky net.

「The thread from before?」

Miranda-san was holding short swords with her hands, and then she headed toward me.

I held my knife with both hands and parried Miranda-san's slash.

Sparks scattered each time. Miranda-san's long and pretty leg assaulted me.

「Your walking manner is bad!」

I also kicked to counterattack, but Miranda-san easily dodged.

「Your hand-to-hand fighting skill is immature compared to your sword skill isn't it?」

The Second praised Miranda-san.

『Good grief, what a woman. Jack of all trades? This woman isn't anything like that.』

She was able to do anything that she tried, she must be in the category of genius.

I threw the knife and broke into a run, but there was a thread twining around my left hand before I noticed it. There was Miranda-san at the end of the thread. She let out thread from her left hand and pulled it.

「Ah ah, I won't let you get away.」

The Fifth muttered.

『This girl, she was hiding an Art? However, she is a woman who is like a spider.』

I agreed. But, I couldn't end like this.

「I can't be killed here—Limit Burst!」

The second stage of the First's Art. Using that, my physical ability drastically increased and I swung around my hand and threw away Miranda-san. I forcefully tore away the thread around my arm and picked a short sword lying on the ground.

Right after that, when I turned around there were three knives that looked like arrowheads approaching right before me.

「—Ah」

And then explosion. The surrounding caught fire for a moment due to the explosion, and then black smoke enveloped the place.

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—While the black smoke was spreading inside the room.

Miranda was flying in the air from getting forcefully thrown by Lyle while throwing knives midair. She rode off the explosion blast by rolling on the floor, then she slowly stood up.

「Good grief, what a really troublesome child. Thanks to that I couldn't play around.」

The failed work of magic arrow, the burst arrow had its destructive power heightened and improved into the knife. The special knife of Miranda also had its safety improved.

「Haa, dealing with the corpse will be troublesome.」

She imagined Lyle was scattered to all directions by the explosion, but she was calm.

However, when the black smoke rapidly cleared up, Miranda looked around and tightened her grip on her short sword. She placed her back on the wall and raised up her guard.

There wasn't any trace of Lyle at the explosion site.

(……Don't tell me, he endured an explosion that powerful? I didn't hear that he has any Art like that, though I didn't actually confirm it.)

From the way Lyle fought, she judged that he had no Art to protect himself. After all his way of fighting was based on dodging.

However, she couldn't find Lyle anywhere. Miranda was sweating coldly, and then she suddenly noticed something and looked up.

Lyle was there. He was falling down while readying his saber.

「Too slow-!」

She crossed her short swords and blocked Lyle's violent attack. It caused a lot of sparks, and then Lyle blew Miranda away with a spinning kick.

「Guh, a strengthening type Art huh!」

She rotated her body midair and kicked on the wall before landing on the floor. Then, a saber passed through right beside Miranda.

Lyle smiled while piercing the wall with his saber.

「Oh, looks like I missed.」

Lyle forcefully changed the direction of the saber and then moved to swing the saber horizontally with brute force while the saber was still stuck in the wall.

Miranda hurriedly crouched down and kicked at Lyle, but Lyle didn't even stagger.

「Hard-!」

She got away from that spot to escape, then when she turned around she saw the wall that was cut by the saber slowly regenerating.

The difference from before was Lyle using a strengthening type Art that raised his physical ability. She had heard about it from Aria and Sophia.

(This is surpassing my predictions. However, how long can you continue in such state when you're completely exhausted right now—)

And then, there was one more difference from before.

The movement of Lyle who was taking a stance with one saber was far sharper than before. To put it in another way, there was a clear killing intent in his movement.

「Aren't you feeling any shame at all? Whose fault do you think it is that—」

「It’s the fact that I was acting dishonestly, but so what? It will be worse to leave alone the you right now. Rather, I have to thank god for that encounter. Because of that, I don’t end up leaving alone a woman like you at large.」

Miranda gritted her teeth. Was it alright for someone dangerous like her to exist? That was something that Miranda herself was always thinking.

「Even I……am aware that my personality is abnormal!」

Day by day she acted as the ideal woman while tucking away her daily dissatisfaction that was like a boiling black tar at the bottom of her heart. Before long it produced her dual nature.

Her gentle self and her terribly cruel self.

She parried Lyle’s merciless slash and then let out thread from her left hand. The difference from before was that it was a short thread that looked light as though it could be cut immediately. The thread that was like cotton candy was drifting in the surrounding. The amount was a lot.

Lyle seemed to think that the thread wouldn’t pose any problem and rushed at her with a slash from the front.

「That’s why you’re an idiot!」

The thread stuck on Lyle’s body. The sticking thread emitted sparking bluish white light and burnt to ash.

Then, Lyle’s movement was noticeably becoming worse.

「……What?」

Lyle looked at the burning thread sticking on his body in annoyance. Miranda explained it in a good mood. Even though it wasn't a situation to do such thing.

「Ahahahaha, do you know? Humans, or rather all living creatures use the mana inside their body to strengthen their flesh body. In other words, as long as they are living then they are magicians in a broad sense. The string I created just now is sucking up that mana and burning it. It will also hinder you from using Arts, you can't exert strength as you wish right?」

Lyle was laughing amidst the white thread that was floating in the surroundings.

A chill ran through Miranda's back. Right after that, mana gushed out from Lyle's body and burned all the threads around him.

「Then, I just need to pour out mana to the degree that there won't be a problem even with the hindrance. Let's finish this already……Miranda. I'll also send Shannon to follow after you soon.」

Shannon's face came into Miranda's mind. If it was Lyle right now, he might really go out of this dungeon and kill Shannon. His killing intent convinced her of that.

(I won't let you. I won't let that child die!)

「……It's still, not over!」

She threw away the weapons her hands were holding and released a lot of threads from both her hands. The threads formed shape as though they had their own will and covered Miranda.

「I'm still—」

Miranda displayed her last resort while Lyle was approaching—

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Going back slightly in time.

I turned around toward the loud explosive sound. In my hands were a pile of short swords and knives that were lying on the floor. Miranda-san was facing the wall while mumbling to herself.

「……I was surprised.」

I was trickling cold sweat while tossing away the weapons I collected to the other side of the wire. *Clang clang* The metallic sound resounded inside the room, but everyone who was sleeping didn't even stir.

Aria-san was even smiling happily in her sleep.

The Seventh couldn't help himself from fidgeting uneasily since some time ago.

『Magnificent. What power! I wish to obtain that no matter what.』

It was the Sixth who weakly replied.

『Yeah. That sure looks convenient. More importantly, now that Shannon isn't a threat anymore, how will we treat Miranda? Though I'm concerned for both girls.』

The Sixth was concerned about the matter of Miranda-san.

The Fifth was teased by the other ancestors—especially by the Second until the Fourth and got irritated. His tone was getting rougher.

『Do you want to dispose of them? That's impossible. Rather, if possible I want those sisters to be placed where we can watch them carefully.』

The Fourth pondered.

『In that case, they will need to be placed at Lyle's side then. However, is there any need to go that far? The matter about the mystic eyes whatever was also a misunderstanding, so I'm not confident with your words, or rather……』

The Third provoked the Fifth.

『That thing is dangerous. We're going to crush those eyes depending on the situation! You said with an awfully serious look, and yet your conjecture was utterly wrong. Rather than Shannon-chan, it's Miranda-chan who is problematic.』

The Fifth was feeling indignation.

『It's really dangerous! Listen well, even if it's alright right now but if one day something happens can you take responsibility huh!?』

The Second spoke lazily.

『In the first place, it's not the place of Lyle or us to take responsibility for this.』

Now that he mentioned it that was true. There wasn't any reason for me to go that far. I had finished retrieving the weapons, so I looked at my saber that was placed on the other side of the wire.

「……I can't reach them. In that case, is there anything else that seems usable?」

When I searched my own clothes, there was a candy in my breast pocket. It was the same thing as the one that I received from Novem when we entered the dungeon. It seemed she concealed it in my pocket for me. I looked at Novem who was leaning on a wooden box sleeping.

「……I've made you worry, Novem.」

I threw the candy inside my mouth. It felt like strength was welling up from putting in something sweet into my stomach.

「Even so, the Third's Art has amazing effect.」

Miranda-san was standing while swaying. Her expression was really stern looking like she was fighting someone unseen.

『Well, it's that kind of Art after all. It was great that you could talk with her while buying time. It would all be over if she killed you with no questions asked.』

The Third talked with a light tone, but from my perspective it wasn't a laughing matter.

However—

「Even so, the First's Limit Burst was also amazing. My wounds are already closed.」

The Second was astonished.

『It's just as unreasonable as its user. It increases your strength without any demerit and also heals your wounds.』

When I looked at Miranda-san, she was trying to do something. If possible I wanted to capture her without injuring her but…….

While I was thinking that, *clang clang* the sound of something rolling could be heard.

When I turned my gaze, the sleeping Aria-san let go of her spear and rolled toward here from the other side of the wire.

The Second praised.

『You did well, Aria! Now then, with this you obtained a weapon.』

I picked up Aria-san's spear and then I looked at Miranda-san.

「……It became something outrageous from that faked hitting on a girl.」

The Fourth was slightly angry at my words while saying.

『Learn a little bit from this incident what can result from your actions.』

The Third was laughing.

『Well, the incident this time couldn't be expected though. Now then, Lyle……although it was your rebellious phase, this is a seed that you sowed yourself. Take responsibility for it. Do you have any idea of what to do?』

I nodded. Just as the Fifth said, I couldn't just leave the two of them alone.

Certainly I felt something like fate from the Circry sisters, but even more than that I understood just how much this weighed on the minds of the Fifth and the Sixth.

「……I'll at least take responsibility for what I had done.」

I walked to in front of Miranda-san, and then I took a stance with the spear.

「Let's end this already, Miranda-san.」

Miranda-san lifted up both her arms and let out threads from her ten fingers and palms. She looked at me while muttering.

『—I cannot, end here yet!』

The threads wrapped Miranda-san's body and created an object that was like a weaved skeletal structure. Inside the room, soil from somewhere was used as the flesh that was attached on the skeletal structure, then her lower body part transformed into a spider. Her hands were also covered with soil, and the long and ominous arms were completed.

That figure possessed bewitching impression that the box spider lacked. Miranda-san turned into a figure that was like a spider woman—an arachne.

The Fifth was dumbfounded.

『……She is really a spider woman huh』

Miranda-san yelled.

「This form is convenient inside the dungeon. Until now I have rampaged many times to clear up my stress. I hacked monsters to pieces again and again……this time, it'll be youuuuu!」

The eight legs moved like a living thing. When she swung her largely stretching arm, the claws left behind marks on the floor.

When I swung my spear and deflected the attack, Miranda-san leaped and clung on the ceiling.

She let out threads from both her hands and instantly created a large spider nest in the room. The Second immediately advised me.

『Lyle, the vertical threads of spider web aren't sticky. Be careful of the horizontal threads.』

I nodded and then looked up to the ceiling. There several large spiders webs were laid out in a shape that surrounded me.

「I will absolutely end you here……if not, we're」

Even though her face and voice were the same like usual, the terror was different when it was said with her current form. However I understood that the fear Miranda-san was looking at me with was even more than that.

I crouched slightly and jumped on the spider's nest. Just as the Second said, there was no stickiness on the vertical thread. I stepped on two of the vertical threads. The threads were firm, but it bounced me up and down so it was difficult to balance myself.

The Seventh looked at Miranda-san and noticed something troublesome.

『This is troublesome. She isn't just imitating a spider's appearance, she is even reproducing its movement. What kind of principle is behind it……』

I talked to Miranda-san.

「I actually wanted to apologize. To properly say……it was wrong of me. Please forgive me. Also-」

「Shut up! Shut up, shut up-!」

Miranda-san shook her head fiercely and didn't want to listen. But, I continued my words.

「You are actually beautiful, and kind……I wished that I had a big sister like you.」

Miranda-san rushed on the spider's nest.

I made us of the thread's recoil to jump aside, and Miranda-san passed the spot where I was standing previously. However she immediately changed direction and approached towards me.

She skillfully used her eight legs. Her approaching figure looked exactly like a spider.

「Just what kind of illusion did she see?」

The Third responded carelessly 「Who knows」 because he didn't know.

『In any case, there is only one thing to do.』

That's right. Right now—

I ran above the spider's nest, jumped, and then avoided Miranda-san's attacks like that while intentionally getting cornered against the wall.

「It's checkmateee!」

Seeing Miranda-san gradually becoming unable to make calm decisions, I comprehended just how atrocious the effect that Mind displayed was.

I put both my feet on one thread and readied the spear.

「……Field.」

I used the Second's Art and my senses spread out. At the same time I saw the inside of the threads and soil covering Miranda-san. It was like a real bone structure.

Miranda-san yelled. I calmed down my breathing while she was approaching.

「It's over with thisssss!」

I muttered.

「Yes, it's over.」

Half-baked attacks wouldn't go through, while an attack that was too strong would harm Miranda-san. The Fifth and the Sixth didn't wish for that.

Then, what I could do was—

「You put a lot of effort into creating this form but……there are parts where you are forcing it.」

I stepped forward towards Miranda-san who was approaching me from the front, slipped through the attack of both her arms and pierced the weak point at her lower body with the spear. The point slightly below the joint with Miranda-san's upper body. When I stabbed that point, it ended up piercing below Miranda-san's groin—at the area between her legs.

Various important bone structures were concentrated there, so with the spear thrust on top of the momentum of the form itself, the lower body part was easily crumbling. The spider armor—its fragile part was pierced by the spear.

Miranda-san was making a disbelieving face seeing the object that she created was easily destroyed.

「—Impossible」

Miranda-san was thrown out from the lower body part of the crumbling spider. Unable to kill her momentum, she was going to collide on the wall.

『Lyle!』

In response to the Sixth's yell, I jumped between Miranda-san and the wall and caught her body. I crashed on the wall like that, and the crumbling spider body also crashed on the wall. A large crack was

created on the wall, so the momentum behind the body must be really big.

「—!」

I who got my back colliding on the wall while holding Miranda-san was falling down while fixing my posture to land on the ground. I could hear the Third making fun of me.

『Really, how are you able to do something like that so easily? Like how you fixed your balance from that situation……』

Even I could at least land properly. Was he making fun of me?

The threads of the crumbling spider were vanishing as though they were melting into the air.

The ominous arms of Miranda-san in my arms were also crumbling. Her normal hands appeared.

Miranda-san instantly took out a knife from her clothes' sleeve and slashed. I immediately pushed her away and her knife grazed my cheek.

I wiped the flowing blood with my hand.

「Are you still not giving up?」

Miranda-san stood up with trembling legs. She was running out of breath. It seemed she had really forced herself. Apparently the spider form just now was putting a really large burden on her.

「If I give up, Shannon will……I won't let anyone kill that child.」

My heart felt pained seeing Miranda-san's figure that was trying to protect her little sister. The sight of someone trying to protect their family…….

「……I'm not thinking of killing anyone. Besides, why are you going that far to protect a little sister who is attempting to control you?」

Miranda-san was making a tired expression, but she was smiling slightly.

「Because she is stupid and cute. Also, that child doesn't make a wall between me and her. Even my family created a wall between me and them. Whether it's my father or little sister……and all the people around me too. I could do anything since the past. Besides I was also acting like a kind person who always smiled, and yet……but, it's only that child who-」

Family problems. It was Miranda-san's problem that I didn't understand.

It looked hard for Miranda-san to even stand on her two feet. She was standing in front of me with a knife in her hand, but it was obvious that she was forcing herself.

「That child is honest and kind. She called someone like me amazing……she told me that I'm a big sister that she is proud of. That's why, at least with how much I hurt her……I too……besides I have to protect Shannon.」

「Protect?」

「I……have to protect her no matter what.」

Her eyes weren't focused. I didn't understand what she was saying. The Sixth was moved to tears by Miranda-san's figure.

『As I thought, she is Milleia's descendant. I always believed in you.』

The Third cut in.

『She seriously tried to kill Lyle and the others though. However, Lyle, what are you planning to do now?』

I walked closer and hugged Miranda-san to keep her on her feet. She tried to resist, but her body couldn’t move properly and she was unable to shake me off.

「I will protect you from now on. I will protect the two of you.」

「……Haha, just why. Why are you…?」

Miranda-san laughed powerlessly. Her hand let go of the knife. It seemed she was crying.

The Fifth said to place the two of them at my side. If that was the case, perhaps it would be better for us to stay together from now on.

「There are various reasons. Besides, I cannot leave the two of you alone.」

The two of them were too dangerous to be left alone.

「……You're really, the worst. I tried to kill you though?」

That was exactly why I couldn't leave you alone. Besides, the Fifth and the Sixth would be sad if I left Miranda-san and Shannon-chan alone like this.

I who didn't know what to say at this kind of time was pathetic. The ancestors inside the Jewel also didn't give any advice and stayed quiet.

「In the first place, it was my actions that caused this. That's why, I'll take responsibility.」

Miranda-san put her hands on my back and hugged me.

「So you're saying that even after seeing my true nature. You're, interesting just as I thought.」

「Is that so?」

「……I'm a troublesome woman you know?」

I didn't mind that. Rather it would be reassuring if Miranda-san became my "comrade".

「I don't mind.」

「……You will, take responsibility right?」

「Of course.」

I would take responsibility to protect the two of them. Or rather, as expected protecting the two of them was like my duty as an adventurer—as the party leader.

Eh? Thinking carefully, putting the two of them at my side meant that I would have to bring them around with me. I remembered that I hadn't checked whether the two of them wanted that or not.

「Well, I'll have to ask you two to come along with me though……」

Miranda-san muttered.

「You're going to take responsibility right? I'll come with you no matter where. With this, I finally……」

Strength suddenly left Miranda-san's body. She let go of her consciousness while still leaning on me.

「……Haa, it's over.」

When I was feeling relieved that various problems were taken care of, the Sixth spoke loudly with deep emotion. Or rather, I only had little mana remaining so please don't make a ruckus.

『Lyle, you're really……so you've resolved yourself to that extent huh! I'm really glad!』

The Fifth was also praising me.

『Well, that's great. They really cannot be left alone after all. In the end, this is the best choice. But, Lyle, this will be burdening you greatly you know?』

I got the feeling that I always got saddled with burdens already, but this atmosphere felt really different from usual.

The Fourth was speaking in a slightly harsh way to me.

『Anyway, remember that the number one is Novem-chan no matter what. Good grief, I was surprised when you spoke of taking responsibility that I couldn't even make a voice.』

……? Strange. The reactions of the ancestors were strange.

「What are you all saying? I'm only accepting them as comrades—」

The atmosphere of the Fifth and the Sixth instantly changed. Their high evaluation of me just now was rapidly dropping.

『……As I thought, Lyle is Lyle after all.』

『Indeed. It was a waste to feel moved like that. But what now? From Miranda's reaction she—』

Seeing me bewildered, the Second explained to me.

『Aa~, in other words, Lyle. Your statement about taking responsibility just now, Miranda took it as meaning that you will accept her as a woman. The conversation just now sounded like a love confession even from our perspective that we were shocked.』

The Third was laughing.

『That's amazing. Just when we thought that Lyle has resolved himself, to think it's actually just a misunderstanding. No, I've thought that perhaps it will turn out like this though. As expected from Lyle. You never betray my expectations.』

The Fourth was angry. He was enraged.

『This isn't a laughing matter. If you said to a woman that you will take responsibility, it will be in that kind of meaning!』

The Seventh was exasperated, but he judged that it would be dangerous if I dispelled the misunderstanding after this.

『She is a woman who went this far just from a faked smooth talking. If she realized that just now was only a misunderstanding, I don't know what in the world she will do next. Well, in the end you have accomplished your initial objective, so perhaps it's fine like this. Well, although she is a capital noble, she is a daughter of a Viscount house. Her status is just barely suitable for you.』

No, talking about worthy or not, I was just an adventurer. It was me who was completely not worthy. What was the Seventh—Ojii-sama thinking about?

The Fourth concluded the talk.

『Well, let's set aside the matter of status. However, with this, we don't need to do anything like crushing the eyes of a little girl. Let's just consider it as all's well that ends well.』

The problem wasn't resolved at all from my end though, what are you going to do about that?

「Ple, please wait. I mean, about putting them at my side it's only as comrades, and I spoke about taking responsibility was as the party leader whose duty is to protect his comrades!」

The Second told me.

『Give up. Or rather, why did you use words like taking responsibility there huh.』

That's not my fault! Everyone kept saying responsibility, responsibility so I……if I knew it would be like this then I would have used different wording!

While I was thinking that an intense pain ran through my body. I remembered this sensation of the strength of my whole body fading out.

「Do, don't tell me……at this timing?」

I could hear the Third's thrilled voice.

『Oh, could it be the second time is here already?』

Chapter 53 – Automaton

—Floor B25.

Miranda who rode on the floor traveling device wiped the sweat off her forehead.

When she looked around her, it was a really astonishing situation.

「To think, that “Growth” will come to the whole group.」

It was Lyle who showed the sign of pre-Growth first. He was wrapped in a blanket even now while lying on the floor without showing any sign of moving.

「……I want to go home.」

「Lyle-sama, it will be just a bit more so let’s do our best.」

Novem was taking care of him with devotion, but there were the figures of other people who also became no good over there too.

Damian was holding on the magic stone while continuing to sleep with the white of his eyes bared and drool trickling from his mouth. Sophia was somehow carrying the puppets and Damian, but even that Sophia was showing signs of pre-Growth.

Novem called out to Sophia.

「Sophia-san, are you alright? It will be just a bit more so let’s do our best.」

「……I, it’s really harsh but, I’ll manage somehow.」

Clara was talking to Aria.

「Aria-san, let’s do our best a bit more. The surface is near.」

「……I, I know but this is really painful you know?」

There was difference in the degree and symptoms of their signs, but it was something rare for four people to arrive at their growth all at once. Miranda looked at Lyle.

「……I don't want to go on anymore. I want to become the floor.」

Lyle who was repeating hopeless remarks seemed to be the type who got their physical condition worsened extremely. His mental state also weakened and the content of his remarks were all hard to understand.

Miranda approached Lyle and crouched.

「A case this extreme is really rare you know, Lyle.」

She poked at Lyle's cheek with her finger, but he didn't react. It was hard for him to even move his body. Novem and Miranda were taking turns to carry him on their backs until here.

But, Miranda was also surprised that Lyle was still guiding them even in his state.

Clara sighed.

「It will be better to contact the Academy to ask them to take care of Professor Damian. As for the guild I'll go there to make the report. Lyle-san and the others can go to the inn they're using—」

Miranda raised her hand when she heard that.

「My house is nearer from here. It also has some empty rooms, so let's bring him there.」

Novem made a slightly troubled face.

「But, that's—」

Miranda turned a smile at Novem.

「It's alright. Besides, you all can also keep using my house from now. The cost for the inn cannot be made light of right?」

Novem looked down.

「Let's talk about it after Lyle-sama and the others recovered. For now please allow me to take up your kind offer.」

Miranda called to Lyle.

「That's how it is, Lyle. Have a good rest at my house. ……I'll have you take responsibility after all.」

Lyle was making a sleeper's breathing—

.

—The house of the Circry sisters.

What Shannon saw when she returned from the hospital was an unbelievable sight.

「—Aa, the world is really this beautiful! Look, the cute little birds are also talking to me.」

Aria who borrowed Miranda's clothes was reaching out her hand towards the sparrow that was perching on the window frame. But, the problem was that the borrowed attire was a dress.

The chest was really loose fitting on her.

(This girl, why is she coming to another person's house and wearing Onee-sama's dress? What's more—)

When she looked at the sofa, Sophia was lying down there in a slovenly appearance while eating snacks. Her appearance that

consisted of only underwear with a shirt on it caused this one here to look tight at the chest part.

「Aria, the little birds or whatever doesn't matter, so please go buy more snacks.」

(This one too why is she lazing around here like this!? This isn't your home!)

When she returned to her home with Miranda pushing her wheelchair, there were other people lazing around there before she knew it.

Shannon asked Miranda.

「O, Onee-sama? Just what in the world is this?」

Miranda sighed.

「I understand what Shannon wants to say. Even I never thought that I would be asked to lend my dress. Sophia also ate the snacks we stocked in our home as she pleased without asking.」

Sophia raised her upper body and then nodded without even looking guilty before speaking.

「Yes. They were delicious.」

Shannon screamed. Because she saw the bag of her favorite snack ahead of her gaze.

「Yo, you! You ate my snack too! Even though that was my favorite!」

Sophia started laughing.

「Is that so? Well, I already ate them all so I don't know which one it is that are you refering to though.」

「You're annoying!! Shut up!」

When Shannon yelled while forgetting to even act as a frail girl, Miranda's hand propped up Shannon's back and urged her to stand up from the wheelchair.

「O, Onee-sama!?」

Miranda made the confused Shannon to face herself, and then she gently talked to her.

「Shannon, it's amazing that you realized the snack Sophia ate was your favorite snack.」

But, Shannon could see it. The mana drifting around Miranda was shaking in anger.

「Tha, that's, fro, from the content of the conversation and the smell……ouch! It hurths, Onee-hama」

Miranda pinched Shannon's cheeks while still smiling.

「I already know about your eyes. Also, this is also the last day for the wheelchair. Because from now on I will work you really hard. The special treatment is over. Do you understand?」

Shannon became tearful from the pain of her pinched cheeks while replying.

「I, I uhnderstandh. I unhderstandh ith! I'hm shorry」

When Miranda let go of Shannon's cheeks, she immediately hugged her. After Shannon was getting confused, Miranda let go of her for the moment and told her.

「Now then, this house will be noisy from today, so I'll have you work right away.」

Shannon pressed her cheeks with her hands and made a dumbfounded face.

「Eh!? Could it be, they're planning to live here!?」

「That's right. Also, Lyle and Novem—hm? Where are Lyle and Novem?」

Sophia seemed to head to the kitchen to search for food. Miranda asked for explanation from Aria.

Aria answered while twirling and dancing.

「Nn~, they said that they are going to Professor Damian's place.」

Miranda was surprised.

「They went out in that state?」

Aria stopped twirling and made a pose.

「Yep! He said something like, fate is calling for me! As expected from Lyle! Being called out by fate, that's lovely!」

Miranda pretended to not see Aria's action and sighed.

「Haa, this is troubling. Then, perhaps I should go out shopping first? Shannon, watch the home okay? Do everything you can to stop the two of them if they try to go outside.」

Shannon looked at the two. Sophia who was bringing a bread from the kitchen lied down on the sofa and started eating.

Aria was dancing a strange dance once more.

(I have to look after these people!?)

Miranda ignored the troubled Shannon and set out for shopping—

.

「Let's not do this today. Lyle-sama, today is no good. Let's return to Miranda-san's house so you recover from your fatigue!」

I dragged Novem who was clinging on me while walking through the Academy's corridor.

I came to the Academy in order to meet Damian, but Novem wouldn't let go of me.

「I already rested enough. I spent two whole days in Miranda's house remember? Novem, could it be you……」

Novem slightly averted her gaze from me. She looked like she was hiding something.

「Want to monopolize me for yourself! Isn't that right!?」

Novem looked dumbfounded, after that she faced me and nodded several times.

「Tha, that's right! Tha, that's why let's return, Lyle-sama! Let's do this another day!」

But, I told Novem who was like that.

「It's a request from you. I want to grant it, really. But you see, Novem. If I decide that it is today, then that is fate. Forgive me, please understand.」

Inside the Jewel the ancestors were roaring with laughter.

The six of them were all laughing hard.

『Just how can this guy be this positive huh』

『The normal Lyle should also learn from this.』

『Wait. My stomach hurts. I'm laughing too much my stomach is hurting!』

『Want to monopolize me. That line is good. Isn't it the best saying this time?』

『No no, it's still only starting.』

『The comment about fate is also nice. I'm looking forward to when Lyle returns back to normal.』

It was great that the six of them were having fun.

「No, I'm not talking about fate or anything like that! This is for Lyle-sama's sake, so please obediently come back home with me. You will shut yourself inside your room for several days again like this!」

Novem was clinging on me looking worried about something. I embraced her in my arms. When I carried her up in princess carry, Novem's face suddenly went red.

「Ly, Lyle-sama! Thi, this appearance is—」

「Be quiet for me for a while. Oops, this here is Damian's laboratory.」

When I stood in front of a large door, Novem was starting to struggle.

「Wait. Lyle-sama, I'm begging you so please wait!」

「What a tomboy princess. Stay like this for a while.」

I kept carrying Novem while opening the door and entered inside the lab. Inside there was a really splendid facility set up. Damian was putting inside the magic stone we obtained inside a half-spherical transparent dome.

「Excuse me. Is Professor Damian here?」

The people wearing white lab coats were directing their gazes towards me. Surprised people. Exasperated people. There were even people looking at me jealously among them.

Novem was covering her face with both her hands. Her face was red until her ears.

The coffin that we obtained previously—an object that was similar to it was being connected to the device by Damian. He was doing some kind of work.

「Oh, Lyle. Your timing is the best!」

Damian turned around with bloodshot eyes. I put down Novem who had become quiet. I headed towards Damian and we high-fived.

In the surroundings, the people in lab coat were getting noisy saying things like 「The professor is calling a person's name!」 but, it didn't matter so I ignored them.

「This Lyle Walt is a man who won't miss the best timing. Now then, it seems you're preparing the activation there.」

Damian nodded and his fist knocked *kon kon* on the coffin.

「I'm just going to activate it after this.」

「Then, I'll also take the opportunity to bring out my own automaton.」

When I snapped my fingers, a magic circle formed and from there the coffin only was rising up. Compared to Damian's coffin, the make was similar but there was subtle difference.

Novem faced towards me and yelled.

「Lyle-sama! Don't you think that it's alright even if you don't do it today? Besides, we might be a nuisance for Professor Damian.」

When I looked at Damian, he shook his head.

「I have secured the necessary energy to activate it, so there isn't really any problem. Rather, this can only be done once so I intended to call for you when my preparations were finished. Besides, I'm also curious what kind of automaton is inside.」

Damian said that he was also waiting eagerly for this. He was connecting colored threads or rather wires to the coffin with practiced movements.

「You heard the man. Don't worry. If it goes wild and attacks us, I will protect you.」

「Tha, that's not what I—」

The surroundings were sending me gazes filled with jealousy but I paid them no mind.

Damian continued the preparation and then he pushed the device's switch.

「Right, the preparations are over with this.」

The magic stone radiated red light, strongly illuminating the inside of the room red. The magic stone was gradually melting, and then at the end it vanished completely.

When the red light settled down, the two coffins opened their lid at the same time. *Pshuu*, that kind of sound that was like air gushing out could be heard.

The coffin's lid was opened and what was inside looked like a princess that was lying down on a bed.

Damian’s automaton was a girl with long black hair. She was wearing deep blue clothes with white lace added on the collar and sleeves. But, the trait that was standing out most must be the apron no matter what. A frilly apron was put over the clothes that looked like a dress.

The one in mine was also the same as that.

「This is an automaton? It looks like they are alive.」

White skin and blonde hair. Her hair that was tied into twintails that grew out until around her waist. Her hair ends were curly, while on the whole her hair was straight and had quite the volume that made it look fluffy.

The white lace on the collar and sleeves was the same as Damian’s automaton, but this one was wearing a red dress that was reflected on the eyes vividly.

A frill was attached on the bottom of the long skirt. Her breast was creating a nicely shaped mound. The white apron was covering her shoulders and stomach and it was slightly shorter than the skirt’s length.

「……Why are they wearing an apron over a dress?」

In response to my impression, Damian looked at a handwritten notebook while answering.

「Apparently this outfit was the standard for the servant or maid in the ancient times. Though it looks like there are several patterns to it.」

I see, it couldn’t be helped if this was the custom of the ancient people.

「Then there is no problem. Now then, it doesn't look like they're waking up though?」

Damian handed a needle to me.

「It seems the contract is carried out with blood as the catalyst. It's written here that you can trickle a drop of blood into their mouth or put a bleeding finger inside their mouth.」

Contract using blood? How should I say it……in a story or the like, any contract that used blood as the catalyst in most cases would be done with the wrong sort. That was the conventional wisdom.
Furthermore, there was also a picture book with the title of "The Demon in a Dress". The contract with the demon there was also using blood if I remembered correctly.

I looked at the sleeping girl.

「……Damian, that's no good.」

「Eh? Is that so? I've disinfected the needle properly. Are you going to use your own knife?」

It's not that. Just why hadn't Damian noticed it.

「Damian, it's already been decided from time immemorial that it's the prince's kiss that will wake up the sleeping princess. Blood is too boorish.」

Damian looked at me and made a baffled face.

「No, but this is the contract method. There is no way a kiss will do anything.」

I spread out my hands and proclaimed in this place.

「There is nothing impossible for this Lyle Walt! After all, I am the man who is chosen by fate! I'm not a prince, but I'm something similar. No, perhaps it can be said that I'm an existence that is even rarer than a prince instead. After all I'm special!」

And then I turned a smile at the worrying Novem before walking towards the automaton.

「Now, sleeping princess—it's the time for the wake up kiss.」

The Third was bursting into laughter inside the Jewel.

『Wake up kiss!! No good. I'm at my limit! My stomach hurtttt!』

When I kissed the sleeping automaton like that, the automaton's tongue slipped into my mouth.

This girl, she did a deep kiss with my first kiss! Eei, I'm not gonna lose!

I also put my tongue into her mouth. Then, the automaton's eyelids slowly opened. Her red eyes were really beautiful. It felt like I would be sucked in by them.

The automaton pulled back her tongue, so I also slowly moved away from her.

「Yaa, how are you feeling, sleeping princess? My name is Lyle Walt……your one and only prince.」

Damian was extremely excited seeing my action. He immediately told someone nearby to write a record and then he praised me.

The ancestors were also guffawing inside the Jewel while hitting the round table with their fist repeatedly. They were also rolling around.

「Amazing, it's amazing, Lyle! To think that the automaton will really be activated with that kind of method! That's an amazing discovery!」

My automaton slowly lifted up its upper body. And then, she looked around while opening her mouth.

「Data link……can't be confirmed. Retry failed. Switching into activating independently. Network access, no reaction……signal to sisters……no response. Confirming mysterious deficiency in system and data. Restoration impossible. Confirming illegal access. Confirming meddling to the body. Automatic check starting……」

The automaton was mumbling words that sounded like a curse. It was gathering the gazes from everyone inside the room like that for a while. She was standing out more than me, but let's just consider it to be as expected from my automaton.

After a while, the mumbling automaton stood up from the bed. And then, she looked at me and her fingers pinched her skirt before she lifted it up slightly and bowed her head. It was an unbelievably refined and elegant gesture.

「Nice to meet you, I am automaton, type……oh? This is strange. I cannot recall my individual identification number.」

Her movement that was like a human was completely different than the automaton in my imagination. I imagined that it would be closer to the puppets Damian controlled. I imagined an automaton that would be self-asserting more mechanically.

I never thought that it would be this elaborate and could be mistaken as a human.

「Are you alright?」

The automaton smiled at me when I asked her in concern and she said.

「Yes. You perverted bastard who activated me with a kiss while I was sleeping. There are various missing data but, I'm alright. Can't you notice that just from looking?」

The Fourth was slightly creeped out by the automaton's behavior.

『That's her attitude towards her master? Is this the common practice among the ancient people? More importantly, is this girl really an automaton? Isn't she human?』

I got curious and used my Arts to check, but certainly her internal structure was different from a human.

「What, you aren't happy with that? By the way the kiss just now was my first kiss.」

The automaton covered her mouth with both her hands and made a surprised expression.

「My, how can that be! To think that my master will be a deviant who offered his first kiss to a sleeping girl, I'm so happy that I will cry. Allow me to call you goshujin-sama in my heart while calling you out loud as spineless chicken dickwad who normally would kiss a sleeping girl.」

The Second was confused.

『Is this thing broken? Normally it would be the reverse. Even if you call him anything you like inside your heart, as expected it's no good to call the person himself chicken dickwad right to their face. That's just an insult.』

I brushed off my front hair. And then I made a thumbs up that pointed toward me.

「Do as you like. You are free to call me anything. But, just remember this one thing……that chicken dickwad will show you how he flies in the sky in the future.」

Novem cautioned me.

「Lyle-sama, chickens cannot fly. Besides, a chicken dickwad is a simile for coward……」

「I know. But, it's the problem of spirit. If I am a chicken, then around this time I will be spreading my wings in the blue sky! I'll be flying around already! I won't be called a coward!」

「……Flying and coward isn't related with each other.」

I turned towards Novem while making a pose. I felt the gazes of the surroundings gathering on me. As I thought, it was great to be the center of attention. The existence of me should be displayed to the world more.

But—

「……You are」

The automaton who was turning red on the face since some time ago and looking at me while wriggling stared at Novem and suddenly her face turned serious. Her hands went inside the gap between her clothes and apron, and from there she took out a large hammer that made me wanted to ask how it was hidden there.

She tightly grasped the hammer with both hands. Its size wasn't something that could be swung around by the slender arms of a girl.

「—Heaven's punishment!」

The automaton kicked on the floor and she moved to swing down the hammer that she lifted up towards Novem. I sighed.

「Haa……this idiot.」

I moved between the two of them and hit the automaton's head.

「Ouch! Why are you getting in the way!? Chicken dickwad, please permit me to attack right away!」

She put the hammer on the floor with tearful eyes and held the place I hit with both hands while appealing to me.

「Novem is a person who I love. She is important. Can you understand that? Come on, apologize.」

Novem looked at me and shook her head with a really conflicted face.

「If only Lyle-sama can display even just a tenth of this positivity normally.」

The automaton put back the hammer into her apron, and then she apologized to Novem reluctantly.

「Chicken dickwad ordered me so I'll apologize to you. I hated you already just from a glance, but chicken dickwad ordered me so I reluctantly! Reluctantly give you my apology.」

「Why are you talking condescendingly like that?」

Novem put her hand on her forehead, and then she nodded.

「……Please be careful next time.」

Damian was recording all that happened until now, and then he proclaimed loudly.

「Yosh, next is my turn. This is truly interesting. Besides, the words she muttered are also interesting. It will be necessary to investigate them. Now then, I'm planning to dedicate my first kiss to my ideal woman, so I'll use blood to activate this automaton.」

Damian pricked his fingertip with a needle and then put it into the automaton's mouth.

「Hm, her tongue is entwining my finger, besides there is saliva? Were the ancient people fastidious in their work?」

Damian expressed his impression with deep interest. Then, the black haired automaton also raised her upper body, opened her eyelids and showed her red eyes.

「……Data link cannot be confirmed. Activated automaton confirmed. Asking for explanation.」

The difference from before was she was directing her gaze to my automaton.

My automaton's eyes shined red. Then Damian's automaton was also making her eyes shine. The two stared at each other. And then, Damian's automaton got up.

「I see, I understand that the present situation cannot be understood. But, the master registration has been carried out. My master is—」

「Yeah, it's me. Rather than that there is something I want to—」

The automaton looked at Damian and covered her mouth with her hands. And then she started trembling fiercely and interrupted Damian's words.

「Please wait a second, goshujin-sama!」

「Eh, why?」

The Seventh talked from inside the Jewel.

『Is this one normal? Lyle, you got the broken one huh.』

Well, for me one that was slightly out of the norm was better so there was no problem.

「When was the last time you washed your clothes?」

Damian looked at the clothing he was wearing. Stains from something spilled on it. And then frays. The lab coat was dirty and worn-out.

「……I don't remember.」

「NOOOOOO!」

When the automaton shrieked, everyone jumped backwards and strengthened their wariness. But, among that I was the only one who took a step forward. Because I wanted to do something different from everyone else!

Both Novem and my automaton looked at such me with a cold gaze.

「M, my goshujin-sama is dressed like this! Furthermore that appearance is even witnessed by the piece of junk who is smug just because she is a special model!」

Piece of junk? I looked at my automaton. She was slightly bending backward while puffing out her chest. She put her hand on that large breast and started boasting.

「I am the so called existence that is called as a special model. My worth is different from the mass produced model over there. Even our prices are at different levels! My spec is double of hers! I cannot

accept being called a piece of junk. If I can speak my opinion, it's you who is an inferior product.」

Damian's automation changed completely from shrieking to shaking her head.

「Not even jealousy is welling up inside me even after hearing that boast from a junk who is calling her goshujin-sama as chicken dickwad. However, this is horrible. Furthermore this room is also horrible. I will regard this as a sudden challenge for me to display my true capability.」

And then, she pushed Damian's back to lead him to somewhere.

「Then, first let's head to the bath, goshujin-sama.」

「No, that's why first hear my question—」

The automaton ignored Damian's resistance and led him out of the room. The expression of the automaton that I saw for an instant was ecstatic. I also could see her wiping her drool.

Damian's voice could be heard from the corridor.

「Oi, I'm still researching!」

「It will be over right away. It will be over right away! Now, please show me where the bathroom is! I won't do anything bad!」

「What do you mean you won't do anything huh! Hah! Could it be, this is the custom of the ancient people? In that case experience it will be……no, but that kind of experiment for me is……」

「Oh my! So goshuijin-sama is interested! Please leave it to me. As a maid I am capable of doing anything. I am equipped with various options. Surely I will be able to satisfy you! Goshujin-sama just needs

to count the number of spots on the ceiling, so there is no need to worry at all!」

The Sixth muttered.

『……He is going to be eaten.』

……I wonder why? I got the feeling that danger was approaching Damian. But, Damian was already gone, and my automaton had been activated so my business here was finished.

I turned around towards Novem and the automaton.

「Yosh, we are going home too. Everyone is waiting for my return there.」

Novem replied with a completely exhausted face.

「……Yes, that's right. Haa, are Aria-san and Sophia-san alright there……」

The automaton clenched her hands while looking really happy.

「My work place isn't it? Please leave it to me, I promise a comfortable living from morning until evening to chicken dickwad!」

My automaton moved with a skip in her steps.

How should I say it, an amusing fellow just became a comrade.

Chapter 54 – Monster

—Novem who returned from the Academy was washing clothes in the house of the Circry sisters.

The amount of laundry was really great with five or six people living in one house.

She had gone through the commotion in the Academy since the morning. Then when she returned Aria collapsed from twirling round and round until she was dizzy and she had to look after her. She stopped Sophia who was trying to get out to buy snacks in her appearance that was half naked…….

「……Now then, let's air them.」

The time was a bit late for drying up the laundry, but it was a season where it was easy for laundry to dry. Novem thought that it would be fine even if she dried them from now and so she hung the laundry to dry one after another.

The garden that was surrounded by fence had quite the size because it was built with the wealthy in mind.

It was a house that seemed like it would be bought by a household that was wealthy even among the nobles and merchants to be given for their children. With the size it was assumed that the residents would hire servants from the start.

With how Miranda was doing the housework alone until now, there were places that she couldn't take care off thoroughly.

One of them was the lawn. The grass was growing slightly too long.

Novem looked at the long grass after she finished hanging up the laundry.

After that, she checked the surrounding with her sight and nodded slightly.

「There is no time, and I don't think that there will be any spare time after this. Here—」

Novem snapped her fingers.

Then, the laundry was making flapping sound due to the wind and they began to sway. And then the lawn was neatly mowed. Even though there was no one else, the mowed grass floated in the air and gathered to one spot in a pile.

「I actually don't want to do something like this.」

After saying that Novem moved to leave from there with the laundry basket in her hands, but then a girl appeared at the entrance. Novem looked at that girl and guessed her identity.

(If I remember right, she is Shannon-chan? But, those eyes are……-!)

The yellow eyes were emitting light. Novem raised her guard seeing those eyes that could also be seen as golden colored. She put on a smile and called out to Shannon.

「Good afternoon. Could it be you're Shannon-chan?」

When she returned, there was only Aria and Sophia inside the messy room. Aria said that Miranda was going out shopping when she asked her.

Lyle and the automaton immediately started cleaning up the room. The loud laughter of Lyle could be heard sometimes even from here in the garden.

If there was an unknown girl here, then she could only be Shannon who Miranda went to pick up in the morning.

Novem was smiling. However Shannon's face was stiff. No, she was scared.

「You, what did you do just now?」

「I was doing the laundry. You know, with the increase of people the laundry also increase—」

「Not that!」

Shannon was looking pale while yelling towards Novem. Her legs were shaking from terror.

「Just now, the magic that you used! Mana won't move that neatly! You ordered the small particles of mana separately like that……just what in the world are you?」

Novem's eyes narrowed hearing Shannon's words.

(She can see it as I thought. There was only one person in the Walt House who possessed those eyes, the eyes that Milleia-sama obtained. I see, the cause of Lyle-sama's actions is this girl.)

Novem approached Shannon with the laundry basket still in her arms. Shannon turned around to run away into the house, so Novem caught her arm.

「Where are you going?」

「Le, let go! Someone like you, I can do this—」

Shannon's eyes shined. Novem felt a feeble power interfering with her body. However, a power of that level wouldn't work against Novem.

(The same eyes like Milleia-sama. But, she is still unable to draw out their ability.)

The struggling Shannon got away from Novem's hand. She pushed her aside and went to the garden. She tried to escape to the outside then. Surely it was in order to go to where Miranda was.

However, Novem went around and cut her off.

「You're slow. Perhaps you normally don't walk that often?」

(I was told her eyes cannot see. If I remember right she was using a wheelchair. Then she must be lacking in exercise.)

Novem who cornered Shannon towards the fence reached out to her and touched her cheek.

Shannon was trembling hard.

「You aren't human! The fluctuation of your mana is strange! Normal humans will fluctuate more and yet……yours, aren't fluctuating at all! Monster……you're a monster!」

Novem smiled. But, it wasn't that she was harboring a kind sentiment towards Shannon.

Shannon jerked. Her body shook and her eyes that were looking at Novem were dyed with terror. Surely Novem was looking like a genuine monster for the current Shannon.

「I know that. Mana fluctuation due to emotion rarely happens with me. Now then, now I'll be the one asking the question now. Since when did you obtain those eyes?」

Shannon was making a scared look. Novem told Shannon who wasn't replying to her.

「Those eyes are really dangerous. I see, now I understand. Of course Lyle-sama is showing a strong interest towards you sisters. The two of you are really interesting.」

But, Novem was also getting curious at the same time.

(Lyle-sama was on his guard towards, Miranda-san? Or else……is this coincidence? Besides, Lyle-sama shouldn't know about these eyes.)

However Novem set aside the matter of Lyle for now and focused on the matter before her.

After all, the eyes that Shannon had were something really dangerous.

「……It seems you were treated coldly by your family of the Circry House. Are you planning to take revenge on them?」

「Tha, that's—」

「Answer me honestly. I will know it right away even if you're lying.」

Shannon strongly reacted when Novem expressed in words her conjecture that was based on Shannon's information. She strongly bit her lower lip and then she clenched her hands.

Novem saw that there was a strong anger there.

(She is, dangerous. It's necessary to seal these ey—)

Shannon yelled.

「That's right! I'll take revenge on everyone who looked down and laughed at me! I'll put bugs inside Doris-oneesama's dress and scribble on Otou-sama's paperwork! After that, after that—anyway I'll take revenge a lot! I absolutely won't forgive them!」

Novem heard that yell of Shannon and her hand stopped. Her voice changed to be gentler compared to before.

「……That's your revenge? Will you feel satisfied with that much?」

Shannon looked at Novem and her gaze wandered.

「Yo, you idiot. There is no way it will end with just that. A, after that……I'll put a lot of green pepper in their meals.」

Novem tilted her head while looking at Shannon.

「Green pepper, do you hate it?」

「Haa!? Just who will like that kind of bitter thing. Obviously everyone hates it. What nutrition. I don't care for something like that! I'll put a lot of it in their meal and I absolutely won't forgive them until they eat them all!」

Novem's hand let go of Shannon and then she looked down slightly with her hand holding her chin.

「……Revenge is it?」

Shannon dropped her gaze away from Novem's face.

「What, you want to tell me that revenge is no good? Too bad for you. I'm a bad child, so I'll go through with it no matter what. Onee-sama also betrayed me……betrayed me」

Seeing the crying Shannon, Novem crouched in order to put her gaze at the same height with Shannon.

「……This is a secret okay?」

Novem made Shannon close her eyes, then she lightly touched both her eyes with her index finger and middle finger. She could feel Shannon trembling behind the eyelids.

「Grant light to those eyes.」

Shannon slowly collapsed after Novem muttered that. Novem caught Shannon's body in her arms.

「Well, she won't remember anything when she wakes up though. She will feel confused for a while then.」

Novem smiled. Her smile now was different from before, it was a natural smile. But, Lyle rushed to that place at that timing.

「Are you alright, Novemmm—nuoh! Koh! Fudabaraaaa!」

When Novem turned around, Lyle who was running into the garden slipped on the pile of grasses that was piled up there and tumbled down. He ended up lying down on the ground in a strange posture.

「Lyle-sama, just what happened?」

Lyle stood up with grass covering his body. He dusted off his clothes from the grass.

「What, I came running because I detected hostility near Novem's location. Even so, my radiance isn't dimming at all even when I'm covered in grass. It makes me feel scared of myself.」

Novem thought.

(Lyle-sama who is that confident is the scary one.)

「I, I see. But, first let's take off those clothes.」

Novem was thinking that the laundry increased again, even so she made a troubled smile seeing Lyle came running for her sake.

Then, chasing after Lyle, this time it was the automaton who was equipped with cleaning tools who appeared in the garden.

「Chicken dickwad! The wife and mother-in-law game is still continuing—tsk, so you are here, vixen.」

Novem also frowned at the automaton who was making a loathing expression from the bottom of her heart. And then, she asked Lyle what they were doing.

「Lyle-sama, what does she mean by game?」

Lyle made a pose with some falling leaves and grasses still stuck on his hair.

「It's a game where I was finding fault in the result of her cleaning like a mother-in-law, while she acted vexed from that. But this fellow, her cleaning was perfect and I couldn't find anything to find fault in so I got bored.」

The automaton crumbled on her knees after being told that Lyle got bored.

「To be told that chicken dickwad got bored of me on the first day, does that mean I'm being fired already? No way……please not that……even though, I finally obtained a chicken dickwad to serve!」

Lyle ignored the automaton and looked at Shannon that Novem was holding. He poked at the cheek of Shannon who fainted.

「What, she is unconscious?」

Lyle took Shannon from Novem, and then he immediately began to walk.

「Yosh, Novem is busy right now so I'll bring her until her bed.」

「Eh, that……」

The automaton stood up and followed behind Lyle.

「Ah, I'll also come. Please leave the bed making to me.」

The three left from that place like a storm. Novem looked at the hand that she reached out with towards Lyle—

.

「I DON'T WANNNAAAAA!」

I buried my face into a pillow and covered myself with a blanket while yelling at Novem who was outside the room.

Novem was making a troubled voice on the other side of the door.

「That's why I told you. Even though I locked the door, you went as far as escaping from the window to get out. Lyle-sama, please quickly come out.」

I talked back at Novem who was slightly cold towards me who wanted to break out crying.

「You should just tie me up so that I wouldn't be able to go outside!」

「Just some degree of restrains wouldn't be meaningful wouldn't it? It's fine, please just come out and eat. It's already noon.」

After the Growth my mana and physical capability were pointlessly increasing. Certainly it might be useless to only tie me up normally.

I was shaking while remembering yesterday. Just how many memories that I didn't want to remember that I mass produced yesterday.

Furthermore—

『As I thought for me it has to be "It's my first kiss" I think? An automaton is a mechanical puppet, in other words they're just a

puppet right? A first kiss with a puppet, that's funny. Though I also got uneasy wondering if this guy is alright with this.』

The Second suggested seriously. I wished that he wouldn't display his seriousness for something like that.

『No, "wake up kiss"……I think this one has an impact. Even so, Mr. Lyle this time really made a lot of famous sayings. They can also be called stupid saying instead though.』

Mr. Lyle—the Third called me like that when I was in the state of high tension after the Growth because I was like a different person.

Furthermore he was delighted with it and instigated me for a while using this material. This person had a bad personality just as I thought.

『"I'm your prince", is there any other saying that can win against this one? As I thought, there is no other saying that is worthy for the award of The Best of Lyle.』

Before I noticed it the Fourth was trying to decide my best stupid saying calling it as The Best of Lyle or whatever.

Why were these people getting serious for something like this? They should be more serious for something else.

『"A man who won't miss the best timing"—I recommend this one. In the case this time it's the truth that his timing was the best without doubt. This one is a good saying to represent this case.』

Even the Fifth was participating. Or rather, even though he was planning various horrible things before this like crushing a girl's eyes and various other things, to change his attitude this quickly……no, this guy!

「Fifth, could it be you are proactively joining in this because you want to switch the teasing target to me?」

『……Shut up.』

I hit the bull's eye. This guy was the worst. As I thought the Fifth was the worst animal lover.

『As I thought, this time it should be "my radiance isn't dimming at all even when I'm covered in grass". What about this one? It was a masterpiece when Lyle rushed into the garden and tumbled like that.』

The Sixth was also seriously joining in the conversation. It was unclear whether he also wanted to switch the teasing target to me or just seriously having fun.

『Simple is the best you know? "It's time for the wake up kiss" expressed everything this time. Is there any other saying that surpasses this?』

Don't get involved too. Even though your grandson was troubled, what were you doing talking seriously like that?

「Seventh—」

『Wait Lyle. Right now we are having a serious talk.』

The Fourth was groaning.

『It can't be decided. Then, first let's narrow down the prospects. Today will be a long day.』

The ancestors were more serious than usual.

I thought…….

「You guys are the worst.」

……I'll absolutely become a delinquent.

「Lyle-sama, you won't be able to cheer up if you don't eat. Aria-san and Sophia-san also won't come out, so Lyle-sama should take the lead here to come out and call to them—」

It seemed the two whose symptoms were lighter than me were also shutting themselves inside their roomd. If I had to say then they still had it better than me, so it was strange that they were shutting themselves up inside their room.

And then, there was one more strange person. No, should she be counted as a person?

「What are you doing over there?」

「—Eh?」

Coming inside from the window on the second floor was the automaton who would insult me as chicken dickwad when she opened her mouth. She was currently stepping on the window frame.

「No, I come bringing the meal. It won't be good for your body if you don't eat.」

It sounded like she was only speaking the natural thing if you only listened to the words, but this automaton was really holding a tray that had a meal prepared on it.

「How are you climbing up here? Or rather, don't enter from the window.」

Because of this automaton I couldn't be alone even when I locked myself up here. I reluctantly crawled out from the bed and got outside.

「Ah, wait! Please don't leave me behind!」

.

—About noon.

Miranda was feeling exasperated at Lyle, Aria, and Sophia who still wouldn't come out of their rooms in addition to Shannon who still hadn't woken up.

「Haa, the meal got cold. Everyone won't come out anyway even if we brought the meal to them. ……Even so, Shannon is also late. Did I overwork her too much yesterday?」

When Miranda returned from shopping yesterday, Shannon was sleeping from fatigue.

From what Lyle and the others said, she must be tired from accompanying Aria and the others on the first day after leaving the hospital.

(Was it harsh for her to look after the house on top of getting those two pushed onto her?)

Thinking that, Miranda headed towards Shannon's bedroom.

When she knocked on the door, a reply unexpectedly came back.

「Shannon, are you awake?」

「……I'm awake.」

Shannon's voice that sounded really in a bad mood made Miranda ponder how to pacify her while opening the door.

There she found Shannon staring at her own hands. She clenched her hands, opened them, and then repeated the same thing.

「Shannon, as expected that attitude is just bad isn't it? Even though previously you would reply 'I'm awake Onee-sama' cutely.」

Then Shannon took a pillow and threw it at Miranda. Miranda easily caught that pillow with her right hand and carried it at her side.

(Aa~, she is really angry now.)

Just as she imagined, Shannon was obviously in a bad mood from her appearance. She didn't know what was irritating her so much like that, but her bad mood right now was really serious even compared to anything she had seen until now.

「Shut up! Shut up, shut up! I hate someone like Onee-sama! Even though you made me a laughingstock! Even though you didn't help me when that woman made fun of me!」

Miranda noticed something out of place when she looked at Shannon.

Shannon's eyes weren't shining. And yet, she was staring straight at Miranda's face.

「Shannon, you……」

Shannon shed tears. She was sniffing and then she wiped her tears.

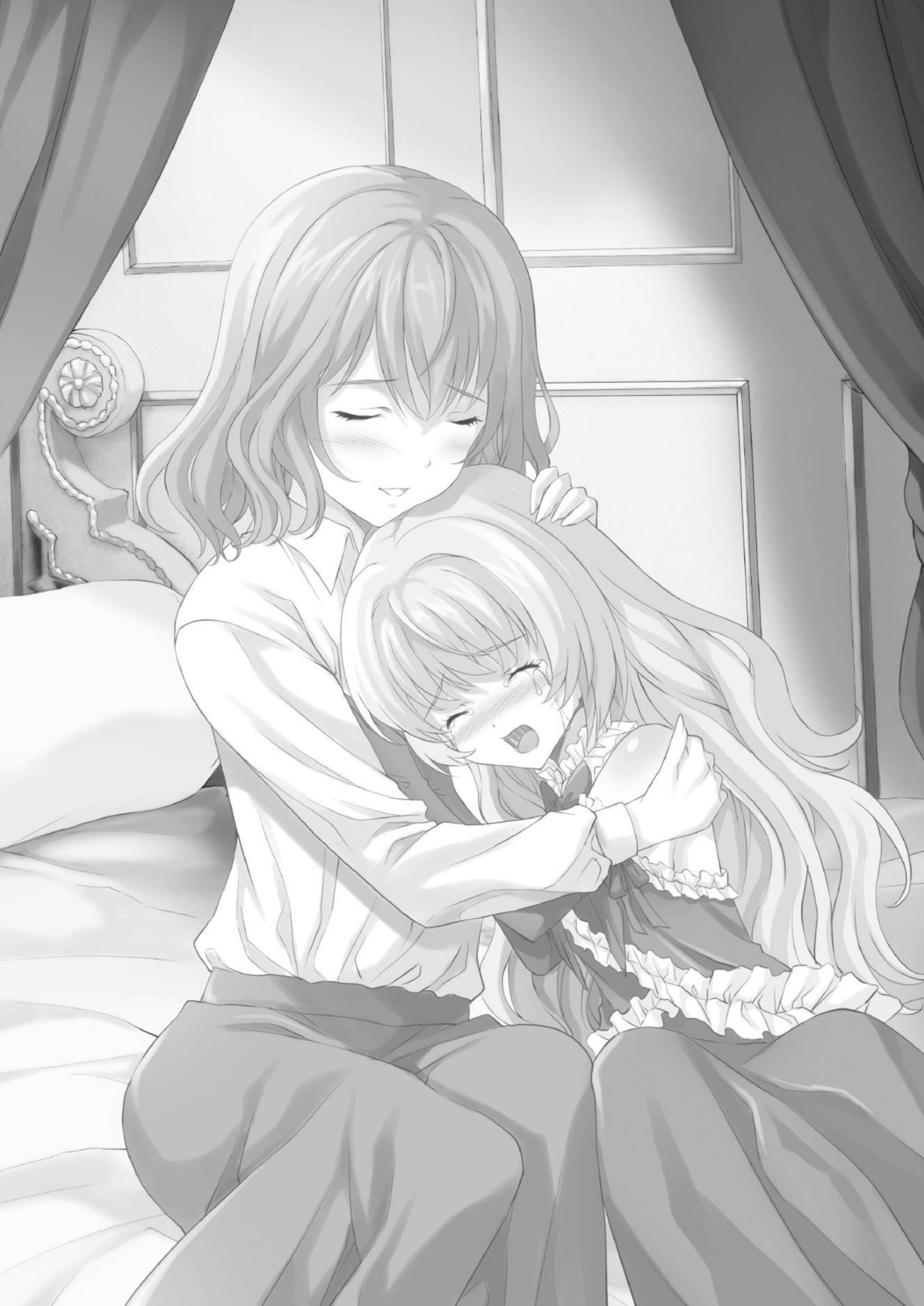
「I can see. Onee-sama's face, my own hands……I can see everything now! Why! Even though I couldn't see at all until now, why now……it's too late! It's too late even if I can see after this long!」

Miranda closed the door and hugged the pillow. She then sat down on Shannon's bed.

(She became able to see and feels confused.)

Various feelings like happiness and sadness were welling up inside Shannon and her emotions exploded. Miranda put down the pillow and hugged the raging Shannon.

「Shannon, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't help you at that time.」



That day—the day Shannon obtained her mystic eyes.

(The day that monster came to the Circry House. I hurt Shannon.)

Shannon was crying while clinging onto Miranda.

(That day, Otou-sama tried to put distance with the Walt House by showing Shannon. But, that was the correct action. That house is already……)

Miranda strongly hugged Shannon, and then she apologized.

「I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. Also, I'm glad. You now can see with your eyes right? There are, a lot of things you want to do, don't you?」

Shannon spoke while crying.

「I want to go outside!」

「Yes, let's go out. You wanted to go shopping right?」

「I want to choose the snacks by myself. A lot……I want to choose a lot by myself!」

「It's okay. Let's go shopping. Let's buy so much you won't be able to eat them all. It's alright……I'll be together with you forever from here on too.」

(I'll protect you. I'll protect you from that woman.)

Miranda stayed at Shannon's side until she got tired from weeping and slept—

.

Evening.

My mood was heavy, but because Novem was telling me to get out of the room and the automaton that entered the room even when I locked the door, I had no choice but to get out.

「That automaton is strange in the head.」

The automaton was happily serving me while heaping insults at me. Novem who was watching that also seemed strange. It felt like she was burning in rivalry.

I sighed. Then when I got out of the room, I came across Miranda-san who came out from Shannon-chan's room.

「—Ah」

「Oh」

Miranda-san's eyes were slightly red. While I was flustered from being unable to judge the correct way to interact with her, Miranda-san looked at me and chuckled.

I also heard stifled laughing voice「Puh」 from inside the Jewel. I wanted to interrogate them later who was the one laughing.

I scratched my head and then tried greeting her.

「Good evening.」

「Right. It's already that time isn't it. ……Hey, Lyle. Want to talk a bit?」

She called me without honorific. Miranda-san led me towards the garden. Miranda-san started talking after we sat down on a wooden bench.

「I want to talk about this first. Lyle, your house is the house of count Walt House isn't it?」

I nodded. I was chased out, but that fact didn't change.

「I was chased out though.」

Miranda-san muttered「I see」 while raising her face.

「I want you to listen to what I'll say now seriously. This is also the answer for the matter that you asked in the dungeon. Why did I seek strength? Why am I in Arumsaas with Shannon……the answer is simple. Shannon and I ran away.」

I was unable to understand the answer of ran away.

「I think this is the bad way to say it but, if I remember right Shannon-chan is—」

Miranda-san continued her story.

「To be more accurate she was driven away. But, I made use of that. This becomes a talk of three years ago from now but, I met your little sister—Celes. The Circry House held a party that invited our relatives and the Walt House.」

My heart beat quickened hearing Celes's name. It reminded me of my pathetic figure who was unable to land even a single hit on Celes. And then also the figure of the First who told someone like me that perhaps it was only me who could stop Celes.

「Shannon was made fun of by Celes on that day. Otou-sama's objective was to put distance from the Walt House that had strange rumors about it. In order to do that he made use of Shannon by making her participate in the party. But, there wasn't any need for that. The talk about my engagement with Lyle was only to the degree of a verbal promise but, that talk was easily cancelled.」

Making use of the fact that Shannon-chan's eyes were blind. The Sixth spat out when he heard that.

『That left a bad taste. This is why the bean sprouts capital nobles are unpleasant.』

Certainly, it wasn't a praiseworthy method.

「It seems that Shannon wanted to have payback, but I understood just from a glance. That was hopeless.」

Miranda-san's words were completely serious. And then she continued her impression.

「It was only one time. Just from one meeting and my relatives sang the praises of Celes. I felt like my head would turn strange from watching it. I led out Shannon away from the venue, then I made up some reason so that I would only interact with her at the bare minimum. ……I was scared. It was a terror that I never felt until now.」

I also understood. Celes was terrifying. You couldn't help but feel scared.

「Since that time Celes often showed herself in Centralle. If Shannon who became able to see tried something with her, surely it would become something horrible. It was the correct choice to get sent away to Arumsaas. I also came along to here was half for Shannon. And then the other half was in order to soften my fear. I wanted to become strong was also in order to soften my fear.」

So that was the reason why Miranda-san was strong despite being an Academy student. I was able to learn her reason, but what was her intention of telling me that?

「But, Miranda-san said that you never had any difficulty in anything you do. You are a genius aren't you?」

「Certainly I had no difficulty. I was able to do everything in general. I even manifested my Art and immediately learned it until the third stage. But you know, even then I cannot picture myself winning. Besides, I'm different from a genius. I'm just a talented person who luckily has few things that I'm not good at. Rather, I wouldn't be able to win against Aria or Sophia if they mastered the path of their choice.」

I couldn't understand that kind of feeling. Miranda-san looked at me while I was thinking that. And then she made a troubled smile.

「My nerves were completely strained all the time even after coming here. I kept thinking, I have to become strong, I have to protect Shannon. But, from now on you will take responsibility for us. It's fine for me to depend on you right?」

I nodded, thinking that I couldn't give a careless answer here.

「O, of course.」

She was a comrade, so there shouldn't be any problem even if she relied on me. But, even if I told her here that there was a misunderstanding, the talk would become complicated……in the worst case, it might become something even more disastrous than the fight in the dungeon.

Miranda-san smiled.

「Lyle, you lied just now.」

—I thought my heart stopped. I couldn't stop sweating coldly.

「It's obvious if you think about it a little. You are someone who is absentminded at some places. But……」

Miranda-san grasped my hand and then she declared to me.

「……I am a troublesome woman you see. That's why, one day I'll become Lyle's number one. I'll kick down Novem and Aria and Sophia and become your number one. Aa, don't worry. I came after them, so I won't complain even if I become a mistress or concubine. But, I want to become your number one.」

—How should I respond to that? I touched the Jewel with my left hand, but the unreliable bunch each only made excuses.

『A romance talk for me is a bit……because, I was devoted to only one wife after all.』

『I also only had one wife.』

『Naturally. Those with multiple wives are the strange ones.』

『Listen well, don't get involved with that kind of woman quarrel. That's the only thing that I can say.』

『Lyle, I understand your feeling painfully well. But, this is something that a man cannot do anything about no matter what he tries.』

『No, for the Sixth that was you reaping what you sow. However, as expected, Miranda is a "woman with heavy love" eh.』

Miranda-san's hand let go while I was being embarrassed.

「I will make you say that you love me someday. ……Also, I absolutely won't let you go.」

It felt like I could see a spider behind Miranda-san. It vanished when I rubbed my eyes, but this time I was assaulted by a feeling as though I was captured in a spider web.

「It has become dark. I need to prepare the dinner so I'll be going. Lyle, too, show yourself properly at the dining table later.」

I saw off the back of Miranda-san who was entering the house. When that back was gone from my sight, I noticed that I was sweaty.

「……I wonder what is responsibility.」

The Third who was usually carefree answered my question slightly seriously.

『……It's the compensation that we pay I think. In this case that compensation is your life isn't it?』

Paying the compensation that was my life was it……. No matter how I thought about it, it felt like a heavy responsibility to be the compensation for a faked hitting on a girl.

What the ancestors called a rebellious age……I thought that the compensation for that was really expensive.

Chapter 55 – Poyopoyo

Aria-san and Sophia-san's eyes looked dead.

The two who came out for a meal looked terribly gaunt.

It wasn't only because they weren't eating. They were ruminating the failures that they caused after their Growth and their minds was ground down hard.

I understood their feelings painfully well. But, their failure wasn't as big as mine.

「My, your eyes can see now? That's really great.」

Because we were sitting around the same table for breakfast, naturally we would be talking too. Novem was happy when she heard that Shannon-chan's eyes became able to see.

And yet even though it should be a joyful talk, Shannon-chan seemed strange.

「Thank you. But, for some reason my memory of yesterday and the day before that is hazy. I came home……and then, I was inside the room and Onee-sama came. I also don't remember what we talked about at that time.」

Miranda-san was laughing.

「Well, you were really confused at that time. Yesterday I also let you sleep to observe your condition, but from today I'll have you work properly.」

Shannon-chan came to a stop. It seemed she didn't want to help out.

「……I'm still, feeling a bit confused.」

「I see. And?」

When Miranda-san said that with a smile, Shannon-chan was trembling and replied 「It's nothing」.

Aria-san and Sophia-san's shoulders twitched when the talk about the day before yesterday came out. The two of them started to shake fiercely. Both of them were bright red from shame.

It was at that timing that Miranda-san made a declaration in this place.

「Ah, that's right. I'm also aiming to become Lyle's lover so the three of you, my best regards.」

Tension ran through the dining table. The Sixth was writhing.

『Nuh! Even though this isn't my problem, my stomach is—damn it-! I can't run away anywhere inside this Jewel!』

The Fourth was also troubled.

『This tension……it's really terrifying.』

Aria-san and Sophia-san stared hard at my face.

「What is the meaning of this, Lyle?」

「Just what in the world happened at a place outside of our sights?」

Their eyes were scary. I averted my gaze and stole glances at Novem. Novem was making a troubled face but, she nodded.

「Well, there is no problem. I don't mind that.」

—Mind it a bit! Novem, could it be you hated me? But, thinking back it was the fact that there was almost nothing that would make her like me. Could it be, she was becoming fed up with me?

Shannon-chan was also glaring at me.

「It's your fault that Onee-chan became strange. Take responsibility, you!」

I talked back to her.

「Rather, this is the result of me taking responsibility!」

Shannon-chan's attitude towards me was very bad. Her tone was also rude, and should I say she was like a little sister, which made me dislike her. Or rather, I hated the existence of a little sister. My tone was also gradually getting rougher towards her.

Within this atmosphere, Miranda-san boldly made one more proclamation.

「Also, because I'm already aiming for him then the first place will be good. That's why, those who are thinking that even just second place is good enough or it's fine as long as you can stay at his side, please be prudent. Anyway, I'll be aiming at Novem's position right now so best regards.」

This place was enveloped in even more tension. Aria-san talked back to Miranda-san.

「Wa, wait a second! Novem is his former fiancée! Or rather, Miranda, hasn't your personality changed too much!?」

Miranda-san turned a cold gaze towards Aria-san.

「Unfortunately, this is my real self. Also, does the fact that she is his former fiancée have any relation to it? Besides……Lyle still hasn't laid his hand on anybody here right?」

Sophia-san's face turned bright red. She stood up and argued towards Miranda-san.

「Tha, that kind of thing is unrelated……isn't the case, but that is a matter of ma, marrying, properly before having the first night! Miranda-san, just what's wrong with you? This isn't like you at all.」

Miranda-san looked at Sophia-san and chuckled.

「I think that right now I'm being myself the most though. Also~, what do you mean by that kind of thing? I meant to refer to things like kissing or the like though? How far did Sophia imagine it? You mentioned first night, so surely……」

Sophia-san turned bright red until her ears and she sat down before shrinking into herself.

The Second sighed.

『This idiot duo doesn't stand a chance against her. Now then, what about the main contender Novem-chan……hih!』

The Second seemed to be scared when he looked towards Novem. I also looked at Novem after that. Novem was smiling.

「……I find someone with that much spirit to be preferable for me.」

Miranda-san was also smiling, and yet for some reason I felt cold. Shivers ran through my back. The Seventh yelled about the situation inside the Jewel.

『Nuh! Father, the Sixth is gone—the Fifth has also vanished! Ah, the Fourth fainted!』

It seemed the Fifth and the Sixth had completely disappeared. Perhaps they were locking themselves inside their Room of Memories.

Then, in this situation there was an automaton who brought a frying pan in hand and hit it with a ladle like ringing a bell.

「Is the trivial talk over already? I have an important problem here so can you two please conclude the talk quickly?」

I grasped at the automaton's words. I slightly thought that I was saved.

「Wha, what is it, that important problem you mentioned?」

「It's my name!」

Then Shannon-chan was chewing on her sandwich while talking.

「You're Automaton right?」

「Haa? Are you an idiot? Attaching the name Automaton to me is like the idiotic act of giving the name Dog to a dog. Please understand at least that much!」

Shannon-chan argued back. It felt like she was unexpectedly tough mentally.

「You're annoying! Or rather, why is your attitude to us really bad like this? Aren't you kind only to Lyle?」

I shook my head.

「She is insulting me as chicken dickwad though?」

「That's not all! Everything she does except that is centered on you!」

Aria-san also agreed.

「Certainly, she is only treating Lyle specially. Her treatment of us feels like we are just some extras.」

Then the automaton made a dumbfounded expression. This fellow, even though she was a machine she had abundant expressions.

「What are you all saying? That's only natural. My goshujin-sama is only the chicken dickwad alone. The others are only extras and no more than that.」

……This thing said it clearly. Everyone turned a cold gaze at the automaton.

It would be bad at this rate, so I ordered her.

「Anyway, everyone is my comrade so can you treat them well?」

The automaton was fidgeting and looking at me with a gaze that was buttering me up.

「The, then, if chicken dickwad decides my name, I will also get the motivation to follow that order.」

Was an automaton affected by motivation? I looked at the automaton. I looked from the top of her head until the tips of her toes, and then what caught my eyes was her twintails……especially the curly part at the end. Each time she moved, it made movement like there was the sound effect of *poyopoyo* accompanying it.

「Then……you're Poyopoyo.」

In that instant, the automaton Poyopoyo made a terribly troubled face. How should I say it, she looked like she would break down crying anytime now.

「No, that……it's the name that chicken dickwad assigned me so I'm happy but. I'm extremely happy but! Can I ask you to change the name?」

……This fellow, she didn't like the name I gave her?

I thought that, but the reaction from the surroundings was cold.

Aria-san licked the sauce on her fingertip while saying to me.

「Lyle, you're serious?」

Sophia-san's eyebrows were twitching and her face looked disgusted.

「As expected isn't that too much? Even as revenge that's a bit……」

Miranda-san was also making a troubled face.

「You're right. That's a bit too much I think~」

Shannon-chan……it was fine to just call this girl without honorific anymore. Shannon was holding her stomach while bursting into laughter.

「The worst! You have no sense at all!」

Novem was also looking at me with a face that looked sad but still forcing herself to make a smile even then.

「Lyle-sama……my apologies, I cannot defend you here.」

……Eh? It was that terrible?

While I was thinking that, the reaction inside the Jewel was also terrible. The Second was seriously pushing his thoughts onto me.

『Lyle, listen to me. Absolutely don't become a godparent and give a name to a child. You hear me, absolutely don't!』

Even the Third who was usually laughing wasn't laughing this time.

『This isn't just a problem of having no sense. I can't laugh at this.』

The Fourth was warning me even while enduring his stomachache.

『Lyle, think a bit more! Ah, my stomach hurts. I cannot endure this kind of atmosphere.』

The Fifth and the Sixth were absent, so the Seventh who normally would be my ally relatively often was…….

『……Lyle, for now, if you need to name something how about relying on a book?』

……He threw in the towel. What to do? No one was backing me up. But, somehow it also felt unpleasant to back away here. That was why, after a pause……

「……Then, let's temporarily use Poyopoyo until I decide your formal name.」

Automaton—Poyopoyo (temp) looked relieved with a praying posture.

「I'm glad. There is still possibility remaining……I'm really glad.」

The Second spoke.

『Just what do you mean by temporary name huh.』

.

After breakfast.

I headed towards the guild.

We had at least given our report to the guild, but we hadn't finished various things like paying the reward to Clara-san or took care of various other procedures.

Novem had paid Clara-san in advance for the necessary expenses of the exploration this time, but the reward was to be split evenly. We had made an agreement that the supporter's share would be 70% from that reward.

It was necessary to quickly calculate the earnings this time and then split the reward.

Novem was walking beside me, but she was paying attention to the surroundings since some time ago.

「For some reason we are gathering attention.」

Rather than paying attention to that, my mood was heavy because I would have to face the unpleasant guild staff. We hadn't gone to report to them in full for several days since we returned.

Surely the staff would make snide remarks to us naggingly.

I showed my face to the guild while thinking that and reported, but…….

「Th, the amount of money for the magic stone purchase is this much. Is, is this satisfactory for you?」

Unexpectedly, the guild staff member was interacting with me humbly.

「Eh? No, there isn't any problem I think?」

Then the guild staff member carried out the procedure regarding the request accomplishment and other related things with a relieved look. When everything was over, he bowed his head to me.

「Have a nice day.」

……Nn? The guild staff member's attitude was strange just as I thought. Previously he looked down on us, furthermore he was sarcastic and annoyed.

The mood inside the guild also felt strange somehow.

Then I noticed that the adventurers around us were gossiping about us.

「Is that the man who got favored by a Seven Best?」

「I heard that he received a reward in the form of an automaton. What is an automaton?」

「He immediately got the permit to enter the dungeon printed from the Academy right? Amazing.」

「Idiot, what is really amazing is his strength that conquered floor B40 of the dungeon with less than ten party members!」

Novem who saw the surrounding's reactions seemed to understand why the guild staff member's attitude was like that.

「Lyle-sama, it seems the matter of us obtaining a connection with the Academy has become known.」

I had heard that the Academy was the most influential in Arumsaas, but it seemed our friendly relationship with Professor Damian was effective towards the guild.

It was amazing that the rumor had spread just from getting him to remember my name.

「Then, it will be easier to act here from now on.」

When I said that easygoingly, the Sixth's voice came from inside the Jewel.

『You're still too optimistic Lyle. Everything won't just go that well in society. Incidentally, it will be time to think soon.』

I felt anxious toward the ancestors who seemed to start pondering something. I headed towards the merchant next to sell the materials we obtained while feeling that.

.

The market to sell materials in Arumsaas was a warehouse right from the beginning.

I showed myself there and sold the materials I brought, but from what they told me it seemed that they weren't dealing with the materials from the floor boss.

It was only the normal equipment from the monsters and also their material that could be sold here.

「Can't you purchase this one too?」

The male merchant made a conflicted face at my words.

「About that, the string is alright. There is a way to use it after all. But, the box you said? That thing is heavy and hard, and I don't know what it can be used for. I will need many horses to move that thing. I completely don't know what should that thing be used for. I'll prefer the material from the boss of floor B10 or B20 more.」

It seemed that the Academy purchased it just some time ago to examine it but right now there seemed to be no demand for it.

「This is troubling.」

When I said that, Novem suggested to me.

「Lyle-sama, if we can't sell it then we will need to keep it with us or throw it away. If we discard it inside the dungeon, it will be absorbed so isn't it fine that way?」

Certainly, we couldn't throw away something so big at some random place. Besides, if we left it inside the dungeon it would get absorbed into the dungeon and vanish. That was the reason the inside of the dungeon didn't overflow with monster and adventurer corpses.

「Guess we will do that. But, we received a lot of money. Honestly, I thought that all of them are just scraps.」

The equipment the monsters used. They were made from metal.

The merchant corrected my misunderstanding.

「That's not the case. After all they are using iron of relatively good quality. It will take time to recycle them, but we will manage somehow if we have magic stones. Iron is precious after all, so it can be sold anywhere. It's an important merchandise.」

Well, now that he mentioned it a dungeon was a mountain of treasure that produced materials. It was the same as a mine. The iron that could be obtained from there in stable supply should be a precious source of income for Arumsaas.

But, the merchant laughed.

「Well, the most expensive thing is the rare metal iron though. Arumsaas's underground dungeon is really great.」

Treasure box. The objects that were discovered from that were also mostly metal things. Especially because rare metal that emitted

mana could also be discovered there, so the existential value of Arumsaas's underground dungeon was great.

Besides, we earned a great amount of money just from a single job.

It was an earning spot both for adventurers and for merchants.

I received gold coins as payment, then Novem and I headed to the library in order to meet with Clara-san.

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The rest area of the library.

There we talked to Clara-san about the reward this time. How the boss's material couldn't be sold at all. And also the confirmation of the amount of money from selling everything. At the end was the confirmation of the reward.

Because there was no one nearby, Clara-san confirmed the reward at that place.

「……I have received the reward. Even so, this is the first time I earned this much money just from a single job.」

Clara-san was a bit surprised at the amount of money she received.

Novem asked Clara-san.

「I heard you are an excellent supporter though? Shouldn't you earn at least this much?」

Clara-san pocketed the reward and then she shook her head.

「Supporters often get belittled. Parties that will pay the reward properly will have their own exclusive supporters so the chance of me joining them at work is few. It's appreciated even just being able to receive the reward properly like this.」

I tried asking what was in my mind.

「Why havn't you joined a party somewhere permanently?」

Clara-san made a troubled face.

「I won't be able to use my time freely if I join a party. I love the library. After all I can obtain a mountain of knowledge here.」

Then, the Third was speaking his opinion slightly even while he was agreeing with Clara-san.

『This place is really nice. I even want to live here. But you know, it's also good to go outside. Can you tell her that, Lyle. Learn the world outside. Experience new things. It will be even more interesting by doing that.』

I responded to the Third's request.

「But, it's also fun to get outside and experience new things. You will be able to enjoy the books more by doing that……I think.」

Clara-san made a slightly troubled face at my words.

「I guess. That might be an important thing too. But, people will immediately gather into a good party. The supporter role will immediately get filled up in that case.」

Clara-san said that and finished the talk.

.

—Night.

Novem was feeling the night wind alone in the garden.

She stared at the moon while pondering about the matter from here on, and then she felt a presence behind her and turned around.

Miranda was there.

「Hey, can you talk with me for a bit?」

Novem nodded at Miranda's invitation. And then her gaze returned to the moon.

「Do you have business with me?」

Miranda muttered while looking at Novem.

「I hate you.」

「Is that so? Even so, you finally show your true character.」

It wasn't like she wanted to be liked. What was important for Novem was Lyle. Anything other than that was—

Miranda continued.

「I hate how you treat Lyle evasively even though you are the one he loves the most. I also hate how you tame the two idiots Aria and Sophia and made them think that the current situation is right. In the first place, why are you placing other women at Lyle's side?」

Miranda spat out those words saying that was the most incomprehensible thing for her.

Novem too also had things that she wanted to retort back regarding that matter, but she fundamentally wasn't even interested in how Miranda was evaluating her.

But…….

(Even I don't do this because I like it……)

She noticed how she was biting at her lower lip and immediately smoothed her expression.

「Is that all that you want to say? Are you perhaps telling me to leave?」

Miranda shrugged, and then she faced Novem with a composed look.

「I won't say such petty thing. I want to become Lyle's number one. I won't do something like that because I'll be hated if I do something like that. ……Also, this is only my hunch but」

Miranda fell silent for a while, then she quietly asked Novem. Unlike before, her attitude was really reserved.

「Shannon's eyes……was it you?」

Novem didn't answer. Then Miranda sighed.

「I'll say my thanks as a big sister. Thank you.」

「I didn't do anything.」

Miranda smiled slightly when Novem said that it wasn't related with her. And then she turned her back towards her and walked to return inside the house.

「I'll leave it at that. Though it makes me curious about various things.」

Novem looked down at the garden where there was no one but her.

「……Even though you don't know anything. Just how am I feeling while doing this」

Novem clenched her hand and desperately pushed down her emotione. She felt like she was getting really emotional today while taking a deep breath, and then something fell on the garden.

When she looked back, there was Lyle there—

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「Damn it-, that stupid Poyopoyo. I absolutely won't change her name.」

Poyopoyo intruded into the room while I was calculating various things regarding the earnings this time. She kept nagging indirectly to me that she wanted her name to be changed.

「Does she really hate the name from me so much?」

The Third spoke about Poyopoyo's feelings.

『She wants it changed because she hates it. It's obvious.』

She was annoying so I jumped out from the window and landed in the garden. There I found Novem.

「—Novem!」

I was surprised. But Novem too was looking at me in surprise. No, was she looking exasperated?

She was covering her face with her left hand.

「Lyle-sama, it's dangerous so please don't jump from the window.」

She normally warned me. I apologized to her.

「That was my bad. More importantly, what are you doing outside?」

「I'm feeling the night wind. Today the wind feels pleasant.」

When Novem said that, certainly I could feel the wind. It felt better than the humid air inside, so I also felt the wind for a while.

「Perhaps I'll also cool myself. I'm tired from writing the various records.」

The contents of the request this time. How much money was spent for the preparations. And then, how far we advanced inside the dungeon, how much supply we had left. I was also writing down various other records. Like which material was expensive, which one was cheap, and so on.

It took really long when I wrote various things like the Fourth told me.

I stood beside Novem and stretched. Then, Novem looked up to the moon while asking me.

「Lyle-sama, are you happy right now?」

I folded my hands and then thought about it. The ancestors inside the Jewel were annoying, they were useless in daily life, and they were nothing but problem children. I myself was lacking various experiences as an adventurer. I also failed a lot. In regards to comrades too, Aria-san and then Sophia-san, in addition was Miranda-san and even Shannon joined the party and it became lively, but the trouble was also increasing.

To make matters worse, even a strange automaton like Poyopoyo joined. My head hurt.

Novem as usual wasn't angry even though there were other women around me. Rather it was troubling because she was endorsing it. Furthermore, she was taking the house precepts seriously so I couldn't handle her. In the first place, the Walt House's Family Precepts for taking a wife were just a lie that the First spewed out when he was drunk. It was passed down since then and treated importantly, but the beginning was just a lie.

……When I was thinking back like this, it felt like there was nothing but problems.

「I don’t know. But, I think it’s far more fun than when I was in the mansion.」

The ancestors who were annoying at various things, but gave me advice.

My comrades which were problematic because there were only girls, even so compared to before I felt happy simply from being able to talk properly with other people. Previously I was living in house arrest at the mansion. I couldn’t have a proper discussion with other people except with Novem.

「What about you Novem?」

When I asked her back, Novem looked a bit troubled at how to answer. And then, she answered jokingly.

「Let me see. I’m happy that Lyle-sama has brightened up. But, I’m a bit disappointed with the matter of the first kiss.」

Novem was chuckling while teasing me about my kiss with Poyopoyo. I could hear laughing voices from inside the Jewel too.

Could it be that I would get teased about this topic for my whole life?

「Well, let’s stop with the joke—Lyle-sama?」

When my shoulders dropped thinking that I would continue to be made fun of like this, Novem brought her face closer to me.

「—Heh?」

Our lips touched lightly. When Novem moved away, she brushed up her hair that was swaying around her ear to tuck it behind her ear.

She looked towards me. Her face was redder than usual, and her smile was like a kid who succeeded in doing a prank. The illumination of the moonlight even made her look like a fairy-tale character.

「That's why, I'll take the second one. Is that unpleasant for Lyle-sama?」

I shook my head with all my strength at Novem's worried voice and answered.

「Not at all! Rather, I want to do it more!」

Novem smiled wryly this time.

「That answer is a bit……ah, I'm lying so please don't feel down!」

Novem helped me to stand in panic when I sat down on the spot. And then she hugged me.

When I hugged her back, I smell the nice soft scent of someone who just got out of the bath. It felt like she would break if I hugged her too strongly……no, of course she wouldn't. Novem was strong.

Then Novem muttered.

「Lyle-sama……I'm sorry.」

Novem apologized. I thought that it was about what she said before this. Perhaps it was the kiss, or it was her responding with a joke towards my question. I guessed that she apologized for one of them.

「It's alright. I don't mind it.」

Both of us hugged each other for a while and passed the time in the garden.

Even so, the moon today was beautiful.

Epilogue

—The ancestors stopped looking outside while Lyle and Novem were hugging.

The Third spoke his impression about the two of them with his usual lighthearted tone.

『How innocent. As someone who has become totally dirty, seeing something like this makes me envious.』

The Fourth was thinking about the matter from here on and rubbed his stomach.

『However, another troublesome woman joined up. It will be hard for Lyle too.』

The Sixth was laughing.

『Isn't this fine? Miranda is a "good woman" I tell you.』

It was the Fifth and the Seventh who reacted to those words.

『As I thought she is a woman with heavy love huh. It will be difficult for Lyle.』

『The good women that the Sixth said was mostly women with some kind of problem after all. It was also like that with my mother.』

The Sixth retorted back to the two.

『Don't say it like that. Their love was just a bit heavier compared to other people. All of them were good women.』

The Fifth glared at the Sixth.

『Do you know how much hardship I went through because of those good women? When the complaints towards you came to me which I

listened to and then I consoled them, after that it was my wives turn who came complaining to me because of that. Do you understand my position that was between a rock and a hard place?』

The Seventh was also turning a cold gaze towards his father the Sixth.

『The words said by the person who used his own son in order to run away from those good women are really different. As expected from you.』

The Third joined the conversation in amusement.

『Eh, what? The wives of the Sixth were awful? They were wives who passed the house precepts weren't they?』

The Sixth asserted.

『That's right! I'm confident that there won't be any other wife as amazing as them even after matching them with that family precepts.』

The Fifth was turning an exasperated gaze at the Sixth.

『If it was only one of them then I think that perhaps it would go really well for you. Or rather, why did you take three women who all had extremely heavy love as wives? It was meaningless. Or rather, there is timing even in taking concubines or mistresses.』

The Sixth hit the round table *bang bang*.

『It was because you had five wives, that was why I thought that I also need to do the same! I only learned that kind of common sense after everything happened!』

It seemed the Sixth who was raised by watching the Fifth had the perception that it was normal to have a lot of wives.

Everyone’s gazes gathered on the Fifth.

『I already told you that one wife is alright. I won’t mind as long as you have a child. Instead, even though in your case it was a marriage of love, you would bring home another woman right away to the mansion after that. That was just wrong.』

The Sixth proposed to the woman he chose while ignoring the woman’s status or political reason. It was a marriage that was rare for nobles. And yet regardless of that, the Sixth would immediately bring back a different woman to the mansion. Everyone was looking at the Sixth with disgust. The Seventh cleared his throat.

『The Fifth also cannot speak about other people though. However, the Sixth who is skilled in ascertaining a troublesome woman has said clearly that Miranda is a good woman. She must be a really troublesome woman then.』

The Fourth tilted his head.

『It’s to that degree? No, I understand that she is troublesome but, the Sixth’s opinion is actually that accurate?』

The Seventh nodded. There wasn’t the slightest doubt in his face.

『The Sixth’s eyes for looking at woman is the only thing of him that I absolutely trust as the real deal. Though of course, rather than ascertaining a genuinely good woman, his eyes discovered woman who are exactly the opposite.』

If the Sixth said that a woman was good, then that woman must have some kind of problem. The Seventh declared that there was no doubt of that.

『You! You said that, but when it came to Zenoire at that time I also said that she is a good woman! And you actually married Zenoire in the end!』

The Seventh's wife was a woman who inherited the bloodline of the previous royal family of the Sentras Kingdom. It seemed that woman was also a good woman from the Sixth's eyes.

The Seventh shrugged.

『Yes, that was why I didn't look for other woman after that. As I thought the eyes of the Sixth in ascertaining woman is accurate. She was really a good woman if I only married her alone. It was thanks to the Sixth.』

The Seventh told the Sixth triumphantly.

The Sixth was silent, but his fist was shaking seeing the laughing Seventh.

It was lively inside the Jewel in the room of the round table. The Second who was silently folding his arms in there opened his mouth.

『Let's change the topic, I wonder what is the meaning of Novem-chan's "I'm sorry" just now?』

Everyone's gaze gathered on the Second. The Fourth shook his head.

『Just when I thought what you were going to ask. It was about her kiss to Lyle or perhaps her reaction after that wasn't it?』

The Second tilted his head.

『No, I know what you mean. I guess it would be like that if you think normally but……』

The Third asked back at the inarticulate Second.

『Is something on your mind?』

『No, normally she would say “forgive me”, but this time she said “I’m sorry” right?』 (TN: In the raw, the first one was said in formal and polite wording, while the second apology was said using a more intimate or casual wording.)

The Fourth pushed up his glasses with his index finger to correct its position, and then he looked back to the past.

『I wonder. When Lyle first experienced his growth, I think she also said “I’m sorry” at that time. Lyle’s actions at that time were really funny if I remember right.』

The Third was laughing cheerfully.

『It was also amusing that time.』

The Second pondered.

『That’s true but, it won’t leave my mind.』

The silence continued for a while before the Fifth brought up a different topic. It was one of the biggest problems that Lyle had at the present situation.

『Well, let’s put aside that talk for now. It’s necessary to have a talk soon about this seriously right? Lyle’s actions in the dungeon, what do you think about it?』

The Second sighed.

『Out of the question.』

The Third was laughing, but his evaluation towards Lyle was strict.

『It was outrageous.』

The Fourth praised Lyle while also pointing out the problem.

『His usage of multiple Arts. He has become really familiar with the way to use them. The talent to be that skilled is one of a kind. The problem is his attitude towards his comrades.』

The Fifth put his hand over his mouth and agreed with the Fourth.

『Even if we discounted how Miranda was setting up various things behind the scenes, the Lyle right now is too dependent on the Arts. If Lyle becomes unwell like right now from the pre-Growth or he becomes unable to move then it won't be strange even if the party gets annihilated.』

The Sixth messed up his hair.

『Looking at them individually, everyone is actually really talented.』

Aria and Sophia possessed Arts, and the two of them were really reliable as vanguards. They also learned that Miranda would be really reliable from her battle with Lyle.

Novem was an excellent magician.

Lyle was also able to skillfully fight with swords, good with magic, and could use multiple Arts easily.

But, even the Seventh who was spoiling Lyle gave him low evaluation.

『It's a problem that he can do everything by himself. Because of that everyone will be exposed to danger.』

The problem was how Lyle was too talented. It was a problem that occurred because he was using the Arts skillfully. Because of that,

Lyle himself and also his surroundings became completely reliant on the Arts.

The Third leaned on the back of his chair.

『Depending on Arts isn't that bad but, in this case it's to an excessive degree. In fact, the movement of the party became extremely bad when Lyle entered his pre-Growth period. A party that won't function if Lyle isn't constantly in it is nothing but a problem isn't it?』

Even after they returned to the surface, they were late in reporting to the guild and also late in paying Clara's reward. For several days after their return—no one was taking proper action.

The Fifth sent his gaze towards the Fourth. Then, the Fourth who had the role as the discussion mediator asked for everyone's opinion.

『Then, let me hear everyone's opinion.』

The Second replied right away.

『Forbid him from using Arts.』

The Third agreed with the Second while also making a suggestion.

『Let's also decide an objective for him. Let's see……floor B30. How about making it a pass if Lyle can conquer the dungeon until that far without using Arts?』

The Fifth added more to that suggestion. Ahead of his gaze there was the silver great sword that was floating in the room of the round table. It was the weapon that the First left behind for Lyle.

『This thing is also forbidden to use. The task will be drastically easier if Lyle has this.』

The Sixth rubbed his chin. He looked like he was having fun.

『Perhaps it will be better to not give any time limit. However, interesting. I'm curious what kind of method Lyle will use to accomplish our task.』

The Seventh held expectations towards Lyle.

『I'm looking forward to it. Will Lyle notice our intentions?』

The Fourth concluded the talk.

『Then, the Arts and silver weapon are forbidden to be used. Lyle will have to succeed in conquering floor B30 in Arumsaas's underground dungeon in that state. Is everyone fine with that?』

Everyone nodded—

.

Morning.

Poyopoyo said that she wanted to see it, so I took out the floor boss's material in the storehouse at the house's garden.

The inside of the storehouse was filled with the tools that weren't used in the house, but there weren't many of them. The storehouse that was quite large was dusty because it wasn't normally used.

The box of the box spider. And then the whole body of the cylinder boss except its magic stone.

Poyopoyo was greatly delighted in front of those.

「How magnificent! They are both a really old type, but both of them are in wonderful condition!」

I tried asking the excited Poyopoyo just what was wonderful from the materials that the merchants wouldn't even purchase.

「They are items that can't be sold you know? Do they have any worth?」

Poyopoyo looked disbelievingly at me. The ancestors were also ignoring Poyopoyo's talk. It seemed they also couldn't find any value in the materials.

More importantly. They were more curious in Poyopoyo herself. The Second was astounded.

『I cannot understand the preferences of the ancient people. They call this a servant? She should be more modest, or rather her whole attitude should be fixed.』

Poyopoyo started explaining the box.

「This box thing here is called an armored vehicle. It can move while being protected with a solid armor. This thing is absurdly hard. Any half-baked attack won't do anything to it.」

「Hmm~……and, how many horses will be necessary? Or rather, even the merchant said that it's too heavy to pull it though.」

Poyopoyo looked at me and stiffened.

「……Why are you mentioning horses? Or rather, the technology here is really strange. The awareness to the concepts of hygiene here is unexpectedly high for this level of civilization, and there is also a part of the technology that is really advanced! In addition there is also the strange tool called magic tool, and yet a car is unknown here. How can this be?」

From my perspective the box was stranger than the magic tool. The Fourth also felt the same. He was complaining at Poyopoyo.

『If it can move by itself without needing any horse then I'll be able to find more worth from it.』

「By the way this thing here that is called a cylinder, although it's damaged quite hideously but it's an object that acts as security automatically. Its purpose of creation is different from me, but we are similar existences in a broad sense. Furthermore this thing can float even though it's this heavy! Isn't that amazing!?」

「……And?」

Poyopoyo looked like she wanted to cry from my reaction.

「Please wait a second, chicken dickwad. Do you really understand? What is here is an amazing treasure in a sense. Someone like me is an extraordinarily excellent maid. I'm absurdly amazing. Please be happier.」

Even if you told me that, certainly I thought that you were amazing but…….

「Just what was the ancient people thinking to make a maid like you? I'm impressed with how pointlessly amazing you are. Or rather, does a servant need an outfit that pretty? Won't it get dirty?」

Poyopoyo turned towards me and yelled.

「It won't get dirty! My maid uniform was created with the cutting edge technology of that time! It'll constantly stay in this immaculate state! It doesn't need any cleaning!」

「Eh? You don't wash it? That's dirty.」

Poyopoyo fell on her knees. She placed her hands on the floor and cried. It was amazing that she could cry even though she was an automaton.

「Why won't you get it! Even though you're using incomprehensible things like magic, why won't you understand this!」

For now I asked her the way to use these materials that couldn't be sold.

「And, what are you going to do with these?」

When Poyopoyo stood up, she already stopped crying easily. Without pause she explained to me smilingly.

「Let's see. The damage on the cylinder is considerable so I'm thinking to use it as parts for repairing the box one.」

The Seventh was surprised by the speed of Poyopoyo's change of mood.

『This thing, she suddenly got back on her feet just when I thought that she was depressed……is it because she is an automaton just as I thought?』

I looked at the cylinder and box.

「It'll be nice if they can be used……ah, come to think of it, I'll learn magic at Damian's place today, so I'll go out now.」

I had to go there to receive the extra reward. Then, Poyopoyo held her head with her hands and shook her head. Her twintails were floating lightly, chasing after the movement of her head.

「Magic! Furthermore a magic of golems! That's irrational! Just what in the world!」

『Hmm~, from our perspective Poyopoyo is also an irrational existence though. I'm curious where does she put away her things like the hammer.』

The Sixth answered the Third's question.

『Isn't it the same thing like the Seventh's Art? If it's like that, then the technology of the ancient people must be terrific. Even Damian said that at present it's impossible to reproduce the Seventh's Art after all.』

I looked at Poyopoyo while muttering.

「From my view the irrational existence here is you though. What's with you, connecting a line with other people as you pleased. Why are you sucking up my mana as you pleased?」

Poyopoyo's body suddenly twisted. She put both her hands on her cheeks and her face turned red. A connection of mana was formed between me and Poyopoyo. This thing—was moving using my mana as her energy. The same like the Jewel, she was sucking up my mana.

「Ehehe, so we are connected by an invisible line. We can't be separated anymore for our whole life.」

I sighed.

「Somehow, it feels like you're really the demon in dress.」

「What does that mean?」

I talked to Poyopoyo about the demon in dress.

「It's a fairy tale. There was a man who encountered a demon in the form of a beautiful woman wearing a dress. The man who formed a contract with the demon using his blood received everything from that demon woman. Everything from serving him food and anything

else. The demon gave the man a mansion, gave him a wife, she even gave him status and honor and money. The man who obtained everything thought of terminating his contract with the demon. However the demon said……the contract won't end even if you die. You will belong to me forever. Even your children and your grandchildren who will be born in the future belong to me, she said.」

Poyopoyo listened to my story and nodded.

「I can really sympathize with that demon.」

The Fifth was slightly creeped out.

『Just where is the factor that can be sympathized with in that story?』

I spoke of the conclusion.

「The man became unable to do anything without the demon. Naturally, he also couldn't run away. And then, there are a variety of endings after his death, like he was taken away by the demon, or his soul got eaten, or even now the demon was taking care of him forever. The patterns of the endings are these three in general I think?」

The common point no matter what the pattern was that the man's inability to get away even with his death. It was a story about a man who promised his life even after death and his family for the sake of a temporary desire. The lesson here was don't get tricked by tempting words, something like that I guess?

Poyopoyo put her hand on her chin and nodded several times.

「I can understand that story very much. I too want to put chicken dickwad into a cradle and take care of him……hah, no matter what

happens I want to take care of chicken dickwad from now on even until your grave, and even after that. I absolutely won't let you get away for life, you bastard!」

I snorted at Poyopoyo who was saying such thing.

「This demon here looks really stupid doesn't it, oi.」

「It's chicken dickwad who dedicated his first kiss to that idiot though?」

I who received that retort fell to my knees.

「You, don't say that. Just forget it already!」

Poyopoyo twisted her body and hugged herself.

「It's my treasured memory, so I absolutely won't forget it. I already put many layers of protection on it and have even finished backing it up. I can fight forever with only just this memory!」

I couldn't understand the meaning of her words, but I could understand that this fellow absolutely wouldn't forget that matter. Couldn't something be done about her being pointlessly excellent?

「Well, fine. I'll go out to Damian's place now.」

「Ah, I'll also come! Please wait a little bit. I will hurry to prepare. I'll foist the housework and chores to the vixen.」

Poyopoyo got out of the storehouse. I also got outside and closed the storehouse's door.

「That fellow, really just what's with her?」

I sighed while thinking of how to interact with the irrational existence from here on, and then the Third's voice came from inside the Jewel.

『Ah, that's right. Lyle, can you listen for a bit?』

I checked that there was no one in the garden before replying.

「What is it?」

The Third felt the same like usual……he spoke with his usual carefree attitude.

『Right, actually we have a thought. The Arts and the silver weapon will be forbidden to use for a while.』

「……Eh?」

The Fourth also spoke to me.

『The limitation will be until you conquer the floor B30 of the underground dungeon by your own strength. Do your best.』

The Fifth talked to me regarding the floor travelling device.

『Well, you can also use the floor travelling device. As expected it will be too harsh if we forbid that too. But, I think it will be better if you think hard. Like, whether you will be fine or not if you suddenly go to floor B25 in the state of no Arts.』

The Sixth was laughing. He sounded like he was having a lot of fun.

『That's how it is. You are forbidden to use them from now, in case you use them—』

The Seventh took over the explanation.

『From here on, we will continue to make a ruckus no matter what situation you are in. Just consider it that your peaceful morning and quiet night will never come anymore.』

The Third was laughing.

『Even if you get a good mood going with Novem-chan and the others, we will get in your way. Rather, we will give live commentary instead when there is a good mood.』

—That would be unpleasant. It would be really unpleasant. The punishment if I used Arts was too heavy. The six of them making a ruckus for the whole day was nothing but torture.

Furthermore, even if I got into a good mood with Novem, I absolutely wouldn't be able to concentrate with them acting up. And to speak further, it would be impossible for me to progress further than that.

The Second spoke last while I was unable to even make a voice.

『Well, try thinking about various things using this as a chance. I have high hopes for you, okay, Lyle.』

……What to do? It became something outrageous.

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To be continued in Sevens 5

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